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Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4444th meeting

Friday, 21 December 2001, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ouane	(Mali)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Ms. D'Achon
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Tunisia	Mr. Mejdoub
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Angola.

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01-71006 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General — Special Adviser on Africa.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Gambari to take a seat at the Council table.

I welcome the presence of Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan among us today.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, members of the Council will hear a briefing by Under-Secretary-General — Special Adviser on Africa Mr. Ibrahim Gambari.

Mr. Gambari: I also would like to say how delighted I am that the Secretary-General has decided to attend our meeting this morning. It shows the importance he attaches to African issues in general and, of course, to the long conflict in Angola in particular. I feel like a member of the faculty of a secondary school addressing a gathering at which the headmaster is present, so if I am a bit nervous, please forgive me.

I am delighted to brief the Council on my last mission to Angola. The mission took place at the invitation of the Government of Angola, upon the directive of the Secretary-General and with the blessings of the members of the Council, which was so powerfully expressed at the last open meeting on Angola, on 15 November. The main objective of my mission was to hold consultations with the Government, the political parties, the churches, civil society representatives and other concerned parties on how best the United Nations can help accelerate the peace process in Angola within the framework of the Lusaka Protocol. I was also in Angola to discuss with the authorities and national and international non-governmental organizations the ways and means to improve the humanitarian situation facing the people of Angola.

The highlight of my visit was the meeting with President José Eduardo dos Santos, who for the first time received me at the beginning of my visit and not, as usual, towards the end. I believe this was a deliberate act meant to set the tone for subsequent discussions with the relevant members of his Cabinet. I also met with the Ministers for External Relations, Mr. Miranda; of Interior, Mr. Dos Santos "Nandó"; and of Planning, Ms. Lourenço.

Meetings were also organized with the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Roberto de Almeida; the Secretary-General of the ruling MPLA party, Mr. Lourenço; representatives of the Inter-Denominational Committee for Peace in Angola (COIEPA) and other members of the civil society; leaders of the parliamentary groups; UNITA parliamentarians; UNITA Renovada; humanitarian agencies; national and international non-governmental organizations; the Troika and other members of the diplomatic corps; the group of donor countries; and other stakeholders in Angola.

When I briefed the Council on my last visit to Angola, in May this year, I mentioned that there were three sets of issues that constituted the outcome of that visit, and in fact compared them to a set of lights.

First, the green light: these were issues on which the Government would like to begin immediate engagement and cooperation with the United Nations, such as the management of the Fund for Peace and National Reconciliation, the design and implementation of pilot projects for demobilized soldiers and resettled internally displaced persons, and assistance in the electoral process.

Secondly, the amber light: these were issues on which the Government informed me that more time was needed for further consideration before giving definite responses, such as the modalities for the disarmament of UNITA combatants and the collection of weapons, as mentioned in the Government's four-point peace plan; direct contacts with UNITA's Jonas Savimbi; and the possibility of establishing humanitarian corridors.

Thirdly, the red light: these were issues that were regarded as non-negotiable, such as any attempt to resolve the Angolan conflict outside of the Lusaka Protocol framework or any attempt to renegotiate the Protocol itself. In this regard, however, the Government recognized that some adjustments may have to be made to the provisions of the Protocol in order to take account of the changed realities on the ground in Angola.

I am happy to report to the Council that during my last visit to Luanda, from 8 to 14 December, all these issues were discussed extensively with the Government in a spirit of give and take. My overall assessment is that progress is being made on all fronts and that the main elements of the United Nations policy and strategy for helping to end the conflict in Angola appear to have been reaffirmed.

Let me reiterate to the Council the fundamentals of this policy. First, there can be no military solution to this conflict. Secondly, sanctions are an important instrument with which to press UNITA to abandon war and return to the political process. Thirdly, support for civil society is an important aspect of the peace process. Last but not least, the Government should be encouraged to implement programmes of political and economic reforms, which, we believe, will be additional contributions to the peace process.

In my last briefing to the Council, I informed it that the Secretary-General had approved the dispatch of a multi-agency exploratory mission to Angola from 17 to 27 September 2001. Its report was carefully reviewed in the Secretariat. A second mission was then sent to Angola ahead of me, and it stayed in Angola during my visit to discuss with the authorities the findings of the earlier exploratory mission and prepare a programme of action. The Minister of Interior, who is also the Chairman of the intersectoral Commission for peace and national reconciliation, informed me that the Government of Angola is fully satisfied with the recommendations made by the mission and the spirit of cooperation that has been established between the Government team and the United Nations team.

A technical team is to be sent for a follow-up mission in January-February 2002 for a four-week stay in Angola to work on details of the programme of action and the implementation strategy. Three main areas of cooperation and support have been identified, as follows: first, the design of an integrated development pilot programme in two provinces involving the creation of capacity to plan and prepare appropriate budgets at the provincial level, and rehabilitation of infrastructures and preparation of programmes to alleviate the social hardships of the people and employment generation; secondly, the design of a programme for peace and reconciliation in which the Fund for Peace and National Reconciliation is expected to play a leading role; and thirdly, the design of a civil registration programme and other programmes to strengthen institutions, which will address the current obstacles to free and fair elections, envisaged for 2002.

With specific regard to the proposed national elections, the Government continues to express its commitment to hold them soon. However, it is becoming clear that the second half of 2002, which the Government had indicated as the date for the elections, is not realistic. The discussions of the fundamental principles for a new Constitution appear deadlocked, the main obstacle being whether the provincial governors should be directly elected or, as the case is now, appointed by the President of the Republic.

However, this and other contentious issues may be resolved by February 2002, when the Constitutional Commission will submit a draft of the Constitution. It is important to remember that the draft will then be submitted for public debate, which may take another six months before the final draft is approved. Furthermore, it is estimated that currently more than 60 per cent of Angolans do not possess any form of identity document. A multi-agency technical team will be helping the Government to draw up a programme for civil registration, which is crucial for electoral registration and other issues.

The humanitarian situation was generally described as worsening in a number of areas. The number of internally displaced persons and refugees has grown beyond the capacity of humanitarian agencies to cope. It is estimated, for example, that the number has reached 4.1 million — and one must recall that this is a country with a total population of about 12 million.

This rapid and large increase in internally displaced persons is attributed to the current Angolan Armed Forces offensive and to the so-called mop-up operation undertaken by Government forces. The mop-up operation is a strategy consisting of moving people

from their areas of origin into camps for internally displaced persons with the aim of depriving UNITA of its support base, especially for food and recruitment of military personnel. In any case, the increase of internally displaced persons has led to high rates of malnutrition within the camps, among other problems.

Nevertheless, the Government has made enormous efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in the country. For example, it has allocated additional funds to tackle the increasing influx of internally displaced persons to urban areas, resulting from recent military offensives by Government forces. Moreover, the Government has made plans to resettle 500,000 people by early next year, and the United Nations agencies have pledged to resettle another 150,000. The Government has also closed down the transitional camps, whose facilities are grossly inadequate. The situation in the nutrition centres showed some improvements from May to early September, although it appears to have worsened from about two months ago because of the new movement of the population from rural areas to urban areas.

Moreover, the Government has improved access and food delivery to many parts of the country that were not possible to reach by road. The World Food Programme (WFP) representative, who is also Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for Angola, informed me that the WFP convoys have started delivering food by road to places that could not be reached until a few months ago. The Government has also repaired some of the infrastructure, such as bridges and airstrips. The airstrip in Kuito, particularly, is currently being repaired, and access has improved on the whole in the south, the north and the centre of the country. Only the eastern province remains rather difficult to access.

Furthermore, the Government has instructed the defence forces to deliver food where security cannot yet be guaranteed, while attempts are being made to meet the security standards imposed by humanitarian agencies and to extend State administration to those areas.

The challenge now being faced by the authorities is how to consolidate the delivery of humanitarian aid to places that are now accessible by road as a first step and gradually expand access to the entire country. However, the Government is of the view that there is now no need for the establishment of humanitarian corridors in classical terms, because UNITA does not control any known territory. Nonetheless, it is willing to consider the idea of "safe areas" where humanitarian assistance can be delivered to those who badly need it. These places will be secured and protected through an arrangement which is satisfactory to the United Nations, humanitarian agencies and other interested parties.

Now I would like to come to the crux of the matter: the peace process itself. With respect to the prospect of peace, it is gratifying to note that for the first time, there is a convergence of opinion among the people consulted that the United Nations should play a more proactive role in the peace-process. The Government reiterated that it would have no objection to the role of the churches in facilitating contacts with Savimbi's UNITA, but that this should be done through the United Nations, which should resume its role as mediator. Meanwhile, the Government believes that UNITA's military capacity has been almost totally destroyed and that only a miracle could save it. According to the Government, UNITA is operating with residual forces only, without any capacity to attack military targets. It controls no territory or municipalities and is facing numerous defections from its rank and file, including some top officers. In fact, we are told that right now there are a total of about 200 officers left with Savimbi's UNITA. However, the Government recognizes that UNITA is still capable of conducting attacks of terror, which undermine peace and the socio-economic development of the country.

On their part, UNITA parliamentarians also reiterated the organization's commitment to peace through a dialogue within the framework of the Lusaka Protocol. However, they cautioned that the Lusaka Protocol should not be used simply as a platform to obtain UNITA's surrender. The Lusaka Protocol should be implemented with the necessary adjustments, as indicated in the 12-point peace plan that UNITA had communicated to the United Nations. They also emphasized that, while the group could largely convey UNITA's position, the final decision still lay with UNITA leadership, headed by Mr. Savimbi. Hence, if peace is to be achieved, dialogue with Mr. Savimbi should be reopened.

In this regard, we have recent information to the effect that Mr. Savimbi has expressed interest in re-establishing dialogue with the Government in Luanda, within the Lusaka Protocol, but there is a need to authenticate this source. Throughout our consultations

in Angola, I appealed to the parties, saying that it was time to take the peace process off the streets and to find the right channels through which serious discussions on peace could take place. The Government and UNITA parliamentarians appear to have seen the wisdom in this appeal.

On a related matter, my delegation has also had the opportunity to discuss with the authorities the issue of the collection and destruction of weapons, in the event that the peace process accelerates. The Government had indicated, in its four-point peace plan, that the United Nations should assume responsibility for this task. Accepting such a task would, however, involve an adjustment to the current mandate and capacity of the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA). As we know, its current mandate allows UNOA to have two dimensions: capacity-building in the area of human rights and helping to promote humanitarian assistance.

We now have a subject which is ripe for further discussions in the Secretariat and, later, with the Council. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that, meanwhile, the pilot programmes that have been discussed with the United Nations technical teams and the Government of Angola will have a component of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants into civilian life, in which the Government of Angola will take the lead. The Government has also informed us that there are a number of UNITA combatants defecting to Government-controlled areas who are arriving with their weapons. Hence, it is important that a mechanism be considered and designed which can facilitate the collection and destruction of such weapons.

In conclusion, there is indeed now a window of opportunity to advance the peace process in Angola which the United Nations should explore. In this regard, the Secretary-General has directed me to continue consultations with certain Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders, other African leaders and other Member States on the way forward. Under the guidance of the Secretary-General, we in the Secretariat will continue to work on these issues and also to work with the Council and all other interested parties to find ways to accelerate the peace process in the context of the Lusaka Protocol, so that peace can come to Angola sooner rather than later.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Gambari for his detailed briefing.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Mr. President, we appreciate your initiative in convening this meeting on Angola. We thank Ambassador Gambari for his briefing. He is too modest in his characterization of himself. His remarks reveal him to be a leading authority on the subject as well as an achiever in the field.

His enumeration of the requisite programmes is deserving of high attention. Doubtless, problems persist. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation is troubling, and the increase in the number of internally displaced persons is also disturbing. Mr. Gambari has rendered a human service in identifying these problems, which must be addressed.

What he says about the peace process, though, is heartening. We are extremely encouraged also to have in our midst today our Secretary-General.

Bangladesh has always supported the important role that the United Nations has to play in conflict situations, Angola among them. That role has been considerably strengthened through the sanctions that are currently in force, which continue to have a negative impact on UNITA's war-making capability, and through the activities of the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA). Ambassador Gambari's own efforts in recent months have proved crucial in providing it a direction that will immeasurably assist in the resolution of this long and seemingly intractable problem. In so doing, new initiatives, under the guidance of the Secretary-General, will be required. We will continue to support efforts to that end.

I shall confine myself to focusing on three issues that we consider specifically important today. First, given the context of continued conflict, how can the humanitarian situation best be addressed, and in particular the problem of access? It is clear that, as long as the conflict persists, we must continue to devote attention to the plight of the war-affected population. A lingering problem impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance has been the lack of safe and secure access. We note with appreciation the efforts of the Government in facilitating this access in areas under its control. We believe that more efforts are required in that direction meaningfully to improve the situation of the affected population.

My second point concerns relations between the United Nations and the Government. We are pleased to note the strengthening of such relations in recent times as a result of the good work done by UNOA on the ground. Again, Mr. Gambari's efforts have nurtured and furthered an active interest in Angola on the part of the international community and the United Nations. We have, on earlier occasions, expressed our appreciation and support for the role and activities of UNOA. We believe there is scope for expansion of these activities into new areas such as the pilot project for war-affected and demobilized combatants. Perhaps it is time to address this issue.

Providing alternative forms of livelihood to displaced persons and to those who have renounced violence is extremely important in driving home the message of peace. The United Nations should do all it can to help the Government in this endeavour.

Finally, it is clear that these steps alone will not achieve the ultimate objective of peace in Angola. The complexity of the situation demands what the Secretary-General has described in his most recent report (S/200!/956) as "creative ways". Paragraph 14 of that report states his conviction that "the conflict could not be solved by military means alone", and we fully share that view. The peace process cannot progress unless there is real dialogue between the parties. It is very difficult tc envisage a dialogue in the absence of a ceasefire. Within the framework — and, indeed, on the basis — of the Lusaka Protocol, a dialogue should make it possible to discuss all issues of concern, if the parties are serious in their pronouncements in favour of peace. We are in favour of the Council's sending a strong signal to all in that regard. Given the achievements of the Council in continually monitoring the effective implementation of the UNITA sanctions, there is now a need to provide a big push. This will bring us closer to our goal in this part of Africa and to the resolution of a problem that has persisted too painfully and for far too long.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): Mr. President, let me join you in welcoming the Secretary-General to our discussions this morning on the situation in Angola. The 26-year-old war in that country is among the most protracted conflicts on the continent of Africa, and we are very pleased with the attention that the Secretary-General and his Under-Secretary-General have devoted to this issue. It is in this context that we wish to thank you for convening this meeting to allow us to hear a briefing from Under-Secretary-General Gambari on his recent visit to Angola, which took place in early December.

We can recall that, at the beginning of this year, there were small signs of hope as an atmosphere more conducive to dialogue and confidence-building began to emerge between the Angolan authorities and the United Nations. Within Angolan society, too, seeds of peace were being sown, largely due to the influence of civil society, including the church and humanitarian and other organizations, which were agitating for peace.

One of the most important outcomes of Ambassador Gambari's visit is the fact that the United Nations has been invited to become more fully involved in the peace process. We think that this is an extremely important development, because we believe that the United Nations can play a role in bringing together disparate elements of civil society in Angola and in seeking to set the stage for dialogue with UNITA.

We remain convinced that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Angola and that sustainable peace can be achieved only through dialogue and negotiation. As we have stated time and again in this Council, the primary responsibility for the conflict resides with Mr. Savimbi and UNITA. We also reaffirm that the Lusaka accords and the relevant Security Council resolutions remain the most viable basis upon which to build. It is time for all to accept that a political solution is the only route to securing peace in Angola. UNITA must play a more constructive role in society if it expects to be part of the political process. In this regard, we are pleased to hear from Under-Secretary-General Gambari about the possible willingness expressed by Mr. Savimbi to hold discussions with the Government of Angola. We hope that this can soon be authenticated.

The instrumental role of civil society also provides a glimmer of hope which must be encouraged. It is our view that such groups can provide a medium through which negotiations between the warring parties can find some common ground. Recent reports, which have been borne out by Ambassador Gambari's briefing, indicate that organizations including religious, women's and other interest groups have been active in demanding an immediate bilateral ceasefire and that they have pledged to work for peace in Angola.

We have also noted the call for a mechanism which will facilitate the integration of national non-governmental organizations and civil society into the political dialogue process. We agree that this is a very useful initiative as Angola prepares for elections. We have noted, however, that Ambassador Gambari has pointed out that the timetable for elections might be delayed. In this regard, we think that the assistance of the United Nations — through its technical team, which will be visiting Angola in January — is extremely important, as it will be focusing on the programme for civil registration and on the peace and reconciliation programme, all of which will have to lay the groundwork for elections.

Another area to which my delegation wishes to refer is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Ambassador Gambari has pointed out that we will need to look more closely at the present mandate of the United Nations Office in Angola if it is going to be involved in this area; we certainly believe that it is an area in which the United Nations needs to become more fully involved, including, possibly, through funding through the regular budget.

Another area is the humanitarian situation. The recent humanitarian report illustrates that there have been no significant improvements in the humanitarian situation in Angola in 2001. We welcome the launching of the 2002 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola, and note that $114 million is needed to provide food security for some 4 million Angolans — 25 per cent of the country's population — displaced by war.

We have taken note of the situation that Ambassador Gambari referred to with regard to the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons, and we wish to commend the Government for the action it is taking to resettle some 500,000 by early next year. We have also noted that it has closed the transition camps and is providing greater access for food delivery. We also wish to commend the various humanitarian agencies, particularly the World Food Programme, for their efforts to bring relief to the people of Angola.

Finally, as Jamaica prepares to leave the Security Council, we wish to encourage the international community and the parties in Angola to keep hope alive in the peace process in Angola. It is time for the parties involved to rise above narrow self-interest and seek to promote what is good for the future development of the country and the people as a whole.

In closing, I wish to place on record our commendation of the Secretary-General, and also of Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his own sterling efforts at promoting the cause of peace in Angola. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for reappointing Ambassador Gambari for another year as Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for Special Assignments in Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): First of all, we would like to thank Ambassador Gambari for briefing us on his recent and very important trip to Angola, and to acknowledge the presence here today of the Secretary-General.

Judging from the positive and constructive atmosphere during the visit, the working relationship between the United Nations and the Government seems to be very good. We are, of course, happy that this is the case.

As far as the peace process is concerned, we are encouraged by reports that there might be signs of progress. In this regard, we strongly urge the parties, especially UNITA, to show the necessary flexibility and will to depart from the path of war and terror and work for a peaceful solution to the conflict. We are also happy that there now seems to be an opening for civil society to play its important part in the process. We and the Council have repeatedly underlined the essential part that churches and other civil groups can play. We would like to commend the Government for reaching out to such groups.

The humanitarian situation in Angola is cause for great concern. All reports confirm that the situation continues to be extremely difficult for large parts of the population, especially the internally displaced, the main reason for that being, of course, the continuation of the conflict. We would like to commend the Government for increasing its efforts in trying to help those in need, and we encourage it to continue to do so.

In this connection, we again appeal to Mr. Savimbi and UNITA to refrain from further violence. Mr. Savimbi is still playing a key role in Angola, in spite of the fact that he himself is rather

silent for the time being, the Council should continue to hold him responsible, in spite of the fact that some say that his days are numbered and that his military capacity has been reduced to almost nothing.

Finally, let me repeat that we are encouraged by the new developments in Angola. We hope that the United Nations and the rest of the international community will be able to help the Government build on these positive developments to create peace and a better future for the Angolan population. Norway will continue to be part of that effort.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): It is indeed remarkable that the Council's last substantive meeting this year is being devoted to the situation in Angola. It is important that the Security Council continue to stay genuinely engaged in the situation in that country and to follow closely the progress in the peace process.

It is a pleasure to see the Secretary-General among us, participating in today's meeting.

My delegation is grateful to Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari for his extremely interesting and informative briefing on the recent visit to Luanda and for his comprehensive analysis of developments on the ground. We see a lot of optimism in Mr. Gambari's presentation today and I wish to hail his efforts in trying to advance the peaceful settlement of the quarter-century-old conflict that continues to ravage Angola and to bring suffering to the people of the country.

The recent decision of the Government of Angola to request the churches to act as intermediaries between the Government and Savimbi-led UNITA is an important step towards the resumption of dialogue and the revitalization of the peace process in the country. My delegation wishes to underline, as we have on previous occasions, that a negotiated settlement of the conflict remains the only viable alternative to the prospect of another long decade of guerrilla warfare. We would like to express our strong conviction that the resumption of dialogue with UNITA should be based on the principles of the Lusaka Protocol and aimed at its implementation, not at its renegotiation.

In this situation, it is important that the international community and the United Nations maintain the pressure on UNITA, urging it, including through a consistent sanctions policy and other means, to remain engaged in the dialogue with the Government of Angola. Mr. Savimbi must show his commitment to a peaceful settlement and give up his policy of continuing the terror campaign. UNITA's sustained military activity is unacceptable and gives the lie to its repeated declarations that it seeks a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

We are most satisfied to see the increasing role of civil society in the political life of Angola. Recent events have clearly demonstrated the enormous potential of this movement, not only in the advancement of the peace process, but also in the building of a democratic and stable future for the country. I wish to emphasize in this connection the importance of the steps taken by the Government of Angola in the past months and years, aimed at promoting the democratisation process, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. This has had a most positive impact on the strengthening of civil society as an indispensable part of the democratic institutions of the country. We also welcome other forward-looking measures taken by the Government, which have become a valuable contribution to peace and reconciliation in Angola.

Real success will be difficult to achieve without a steady improvement in relations between the Government of Angola and the United Nations and the strengthening of an atmosphere of trust. We urge the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser on Africa to continue playing an active role in the search for peace and reconciliation in Angola. In this connection, I would like to ask Mr. Gambari what the next steps will be in the resumed process of dialogue between the Government and UNITA. Does he see any new role for the United Nations if this dialogue continues — and continues successfully?

Finally, I wish to use this opportunity to reaffirm Ukraine's strong support for the peace process in Angola. We will continue to do our utmost to contribute to achieving this goal and will work together with the Security Council and the Government of Angola on this path.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Gambari for his briefing on the situation in Angola. We appreciate his efforts to promote peace in that country. The peace process in Angola is currently in the process of changing and Mr. Gambari has said that there is now

a window of hope. The situation is generally encouraging.

We thank you, Mr. President, for having arranged this open meeting.

Early this year, President Dos Santos made a four-point proposal for the achievement of peace in Angola. Since then, his Government has repeatedly reiterated the validity of the Lusaka Protocol, indicated its willingness to continue to strive for national reconciliation and comprehensive peace and emphasized its readiness to pursue, together with civil groups in Angola, ways, formats and specific methods to attain reconciliation and peace.

The Chinese delegation highly appreciates the efforts made by the Angolan Government. It is regrettable, however, that the armed faction under the leadership of Mr. Savimbi is turning a deaf ear to the positive proposals of the Angolan Government and continues to engage in terrorist activities, undermining peace in Angola and causing many casualties. Mr. Savimbi and the armed faction under his leadership must be held fully responsible for the repeated setbacks in the peace process in Angola.

In such circumstances, we demand that Mr. Savimbi and the armed faction of UNITA respond immediately and positively to the good will of the Angolan Government, lay down their arms and enter peace negotiations with the Government with the priority of exploring ways and means to establish a ceasefire and to resettle armed combatants. This will help create conditions conducive to a political settlement of the Angolan conflict and to improving the humanitarian situation in that country.

In the context of the Angolan peace process, we commend the approach taken by the Angolan Government in giving full play to the role of civil groups. We believe that the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant Security Council resolutions continue to be the bases of the peace process.

We hope that the United Nations will play a greater role in re-establishing peace in Angola. In this respect, we support the ongoing efforts of Mr. Gambari and wish him greater success.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I thank Ambassador Gambari for what I think was a most important and most significant report on his visit, which I think was itself most important and most significant. I would like to express the thanks of my delegation to the Government of Angola for the extremely useful and forthcoming reception it gave Under-Secretary-General Gambari in Luanda. I apologize to him that I had to duck out of the room for the last few minutes of his briefing. I do not know about others around the table, but we are certainly finding that the approach of the holiday period is making life busier, not more relaxed.

Others around the table, I think, have heard enough from the United Kingdom about our general approach to Angola and I will not repeat it now. I think that the principles on which our policy is based are well known and that they accord with those of other delegations around this table. I would like, however, to ask Mr. Gambari a number of questions arising from his very useful and stimulating briefing.

The crux of the matter, as he said, relates to the peace process and to how that might be restarted. That is, after all, what we are all here to try and help bring about and I think it deserves the utmost priority. Professor Gambari said that he urged everyone he spoke to that it was time to take the peace process "off the streets". I would strongly agree with that, and it would be very helpful to have confirmation that that was the resonance that Professor Gambari found among the wide range of people he spoke to in Luanda. If that is the case, then it seems to me that we do have an opportunity to help make a contribution to move this forward. Again, it would be helpful to hear if that is the case — how Under-Secretary-General Gambari would see the process of re-establishing regular contact between the two sides and with UNITA evolving.

I would endorse what he said about the importance and the significance of the Government's decision on a potential United Nations role here and a potential role for the churches, but it would be interesting to hear anything further Under-Secretary-General Gambari might want to say about how that would work out and how the current sanctions regime might affect this, because as he rightly pointed out, sanctions are not an end in themselves. Nor are they an instrument of punishment. Rather, they are an instrument of pressure and persuasion to get UNITA back to the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, which we all support.

Secondly, a number of speakers around the table have picked up on the role of civil society. Ambassador

Kuchinsky of Ukraine has just made quite an extensive statement about it. It would be helpful to hear from Under-Secretary-General Gambari whether there is anything further he would want to say at this stage about how he sees the role of civil society, how the United Nations might be involved in that general process and whether there is anything more the Council could do to support it.

Finally, I should not finish without referring to the humanitarian situation. I was sobered to hear Under-Secretary-General Gambari's report on this situation. Sadly, overall it must be bad news, but the measures that the Government of Angola is taking are good news. Nevertheless, I think that we must all be extremely concerned about the prospect of over 4 million internally displaced persons and refugees, and I would be interested to hear whether Under-Secretary-General Gambari has yet been able to form an assessment on whether forced displacement is increasing or decreasing and on what the international community can do to help more.

In this context, it occurs to me that it has now been well over a year since the Council was last briefed on the humanitarian situation in Angola, and I think that it might be helpful for us to repeat that exercise fairly soon, also hearing, too, from the Government of Angola. I was very impressed with the presentation that Sergio Vieira de Mello gave the Council over a year ago when he was still in charge of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. I think that presentation was very helpful in sensitizing Council members to the need. If a similar briefing would help to sensitize the donor community further to the need to help, I think that would be a real contribution to mobilizing resources and funds and trying to do something to help these poor people.

Ms. D'Achon (France) (*spoke in French*): We are delighted today to meet with Ambassador Gambari, back from his recent mission to Angola, and we are all grateful to him for his efforts to find a way conducive to dialogue and reconciliation in Angola between the Government and UNITA on the basis of the Lusaka Protocol.

The consequences of the Angolan conflict are tragic for the Angolan people, a great majority of whom have never known peace. Fighting and guerrilla activities spread terror among the people there. Lines of communication are the target of deadly attacks, and the several million mines planted in the territory make road travel extremely dangerous.

We are all aware of the cause of this interminable war that has ravaged Angola without letup since its independence in 1975. It is Jonas Savimbi's UNITA which bears the main responsibility for this tragedy, because they have not implemented the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol, because they have re-armed, and now, again, because they are still carrying out intolerable attacks throughout the country, including against the civilian population.

Even if the Government has managed to considerably weaken UNITA's forces, the latter has nevertheless preserved its guerrilla capacities throughout the country, as borne out by the recent terrorist attacks directed against the civilian population that the international community unanimously condemned. That is why, on behalf of the international community, the Security Council enacted sanctions against Mr. Savimbi's movement. We believe that these sanctions are necessary to force UNITA to abide by its obligations and to return to the path of peace. They must be implemented, and once again we would like to take this opportunity to salute the efforts of Ambassador Larrain and of his Monitoring Mechanism.

Nevertheless, as many speakers have pointed out, clearly there is no military solution to the Angolan crisis. We are therefore happy to note that recently chances for a resumption of the dialogue have emerged. This has to do with the dynamism of civil society, and particularly that of the churches. I wish to recall here that the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize was awarded on 12 December to Monsignor Zacarias Camuenho, the Archbishop of Lubango and Chairman of the Inter-Church Committee for Peace in Angola, for his action in support of a return to peace in his country. But this was also the result of the efforts made by the United Nations, and more specifically, those of Mr. Gambari. Ambassador Gambari is indeed one of the craftsmen of the good relationship now enjoyed between the Angolan authorities and the United Nations. This should be welcomed.

We are also pleased to note that, for its part, the Government is responding positively to those efforts. The policy of openness, attested to by the Angolan Government, is an encouraging sign of this. We could, inter alia, refer to measures taken for amnesty for and reintegration of former combatants and the

announcement of elections and institutional reforms to which the international community, in due course, should lend all necessary support.

We should also welcome the gestures of openness by the Government towards Jonas Savimbi by having invited him to dialogue regularly under certain conditions and by requesting him to set a date for the cessation of hostilities or solemnly to renounce war.

Furthermore, as was stated by Ambassador Gambari, the Government has just authorized the United Nations to play an even more important role to facilitate a dialogue between the two parties to the conflict. We hope that UNITA will act on these signs of goodwill about which Mr. Gambari spoke. Like the United Kingdom representative, I would like to hear his views on the reality of this commitment.

The international community should make a rapid and strong commitment to work with Angola in the peace process and to help rebuild the country. Right away, though, it should help the Angolans to address the grave humanitarian situation there. A solution must be found that will provide security for the provision of humanitarian assistance, for facilitating contacts between non-governmental organizations and the people and for enabling humanitarian organizations to establish contact with all parties so that they can do their jobs.

Indeed, it continues to be too difficult to gain access to people in distress. The poor condition of landing strips, the lack of fuel and the precarious security conditions are obstacles to intervention by humanitarian organizations. We were encouraged to hear Mr. Gambari say that progress has been made in this area. But it is up to the Government and to UNITA to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the territory of Angola, including in the East. UNITA absolutely must stop threatening the security of humanitarian convoys. And for its part, the Government must do everything to ensure their security in the areas under its control.

In the longer term, we would recall that national reconciliation and a return to stability in Angola also require an improved economic and social situation, the establishment of the rule of law and the protection of human rights. In all those areas too, the international community will have a key role to play in support of the peace process.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I too, on behalf of my delegation, would like to express appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Gambari, for his briefing this morning on his visit to Angola. We are very pleased that he has reported in positive terms on important elements of the visit, especially in relation to the peace process. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Gambari for their work in advancing peace and reconciliation in Angola.

Ireland is especially pleased that the visit appears to have further strengthened the relationship between Angola and the United Nations. We believe that the best prospect for peace in Angola rests on close collaboration between the international community and the Angolan authorities on a wide range of issues. We are greatly encouraged by Mr. Gambari's comment that the Government in Luanda is amenable to the United Nations exploring with UNITA the question of whether UNITA is willing to engage seriously in a process for peace in Angola.

We believe that Mr. Gambari's remarks on the existence of a window of opportunity in some of the areas which were the subject of the inter-agency team's visit to Angola were especially interesting and hopeful. We would strongly emphasize the importance of examining how best now to operationalize the role of the United Nations in those areas, if these are deemed to be serious opportunities. Ireland continues to strongly believe that the Lusaka Protocol must be the basis for peace in Angola. The Protocol should chart a political path for all shades of Angolan political opinion. Each of those voices deserves a chance to be heard, although it must be clear that that can be so only if all the parties are committed to a democratic national discussion. That discussion can and should include all views from across the spectrum: Government, opposition, and civil society and other organizations. UNITA, if it took the steps expected of it, could rightly expect to look forward to a place in that dialogue. We reiterate our view that a military solution to the Angolan conflict is not possible or achievable.

It is regrettable that the humanitarian situation in Angola remains so bleak — this at the end of a year when good progress had been expected in relation to access to the enormous numbers of people at risk, and also in relation to the resettlement of displaced persons. It is clear that the positive developments we had hoped for have failed so far to materialize, although we welcome Mr. Gambari's news of the Government's

efforts. We strongly encourage the United Nations to continue to work with the authorities on establishing ways in which the horrific circumstances of the civilian population can be addressed. It is also our belief that the Council's continuing commitment to the implementation of the sanctions against UNITA is having its own desired impact.

Those measures are contributing in their own way to the new possibilities to which Mr. Gambari referred. We observe also that they appear to be playing their part in improving relations between Angola and those States which might in the past have supported UNITA in different ways. We welcome those developments, some of which are recent, and we commend those who are taking those steps.

We hold the view that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2001/36) adopted by the Council after its meeting on 15 November 2001 provided Mr. Gambari with a clear and balanced message to convey to Angolans of all views, many of whom he met and some of whom he could not meet. The responsibility of UNITA to cease violence was plainly spelled out. The Council's expectation that the authorities should work for economic reform and for transparent and accountable governance was another important element. In addition, the role of the Government, the political parties and civil society in advancing the peace process was also underlined. It is Ireland's hope that those aspects of the Council's views have been widely received in Angola.

This is the third occasion since September on which we have discussed Angola in this Chamber. We believe that that fact alone is a recognition of the Council's desire to see the situation in Angola move forward. Mr. Gambari's report on his visit gives some cause for optimism that a glimmer of light exists against the background of political and military stalemate. We would not wish to exaggerate that sense of hope. However, we believe it is incumbent upon the Angolan Government, other actors and us here in the Security Council and in the United Nations to do everything we can to ensure that no opportunity is lost.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): This afternoon we are going to have a wrap-up meeting on the work of the month, but since it is likely to be the last meeting of the year we thought it might be useful to review the successes and the failures of the year as well. We were going to say this afternoon that Angola was clearly not a success story. But today Ambassador Gambari has given us a glimmer of hope. Yet he has also created a problem for us, because we now have to re-write our speech for this afternoon.

I certainly agree with Ambassador Chowdhury, who said that Ambassador Gambari had been far too modest about his own personal contribution to what has happened. We have no doubt that it is as a result of his strong personal involvement that we see what he has called a new window of opportunity in Angola.

But this, as everyone has observed, is a 26-year-old conflict. There must have been other windows of opportunity that came and went. The question is, "How do we keep this window of opportunity truly open?" Here, I was going to ask Ambassador Gambari whether he could, in his responses, perhaps reflect a little more on the factors that have created the new window of opportunity. Some of the factors have been touched on in the discussion so far, for example the military defeats of UNITA; clearly, that is a new factor. Another factor is the willingness of the Government to get the United Nations engaged in the process of dialogue. Here, I must say I join Ambassador Eldon in thanking the Government of Angola for the access it gave Ambassador Gambari; I am glad he met President Dos Santos on the first day, not the last day. I hope that becomes a pattern for his visits there.

Were there any other factors? For example — just speaking out of ignorance — did the neighbours of Angola play a role? Has civil society been touched upon? It would be helpful if Mr. Gambari could tell us exactly what has created this new window of opportunity, so that we can, in a sense, strengthen those factors that created this window.

Secondly, I think everyone has agreed in their remarks today that the humanitarian situation, to put it very mildly, is very bad. The most alarming figure we heard this morning is, if I heard Ambassador Gambari correctly, that there are 4.1 million internally displaced persons out of a population of 12 million. That makes it one third of the population — 33 per cent. This must surely be the highest figure for any country in the world.

I wonder whether Ambassador Gambari can confirm that, because if that figure is right, it shows how large the problem is. Indeed, according to a World Food Programme report last week, the latest military campaigns against UNITA in central and eastern

Angola have actually led to another significant increase of internally displaced persons in these regions, with acute malnutrition rates reaching as high as 25 per cent in some refugee centres. I believe several previous speakers asked what more can be done to ameliorate the humanitarian situation. If Ambassador Gambari could respond to that, that would be very helpful.

Thirdly — again, this is unique in today's debate — everyone has emphasized the important role of civil society and the role of the churches. Here I agree with Ambassador Durrant's comment that when the technical teams goes to Angola, it should have more meetings with civil society members. But until I heard the representative of France, these civil society figures appeared to be faceless, nameless heroes. I am glad that one of them has been recognized and has received the Sakharov Prize.

But what else can we do to clearly help this positive new factor? Again, speaking off the cuff, for example, I wonder if it would be helpful to perhaps invite some members of civil society to come to the Council to speak to us, either in an Arria-formula meeting or in some other meeting. This may have two positive benefits. One, of course, is that we will hear directly from a party that has played a positive role, and, secondly, we hope that having a dialogue with them will further enhance their capacity to play an even more constructive role in the political process. I wonder whether Ambassador Gambari would like to comment on that suggestion.

Finally, Ambassador Chowdhury referred to the last report of the Secretary-General, where the Secretary-General said that the complexity of the situation clearly requires what he called "creative ways" to solve the problem.

I must thank Ambassador Gambari for coming to speak to us almost immediately, right off the plane, because we know he landed yesterday; we knew it was a tremendous imposition for him to come speak to us right away, but if the jet lag is not troubling him too much, if he has other creative thoughts, I hope he will share them with us.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation expresses its gratitude to Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari for his presence at this meeting and for the information he has given us. We are pleased that his visit was positive and has yielded good results.

Our interest in the briefing relates mainly to the expectations generated by the previous meeting, of 15 November, on the role the United Nations could play, particularly with respect to his next visit to the region, so that the peace process could move forward in accordance with the Lusaka Protocol and the pronouncements of the Council. What is really important to the Council is that the Angola peace process move beyond the deadlock in political and military terms, as the Secretary-General defined it in the last report on the activities of the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA) in Luanda. It is clear that UNOA can contribute to much broader work only if the political conditions exist in the country to make that possible. We are also pleased that the consultations with the Government of Angola are considering a series of activities, including a disarmament and weapons collection programme, which can be expanded by the United Nations presence in the future.

We have previously expressed the view that it is a good idea to include civil society more in the peace process for at least two reasons: first, to reduce the impact of bellicose rhetoric and the solutions by force that at certain stages dominate the peace process; and secondly, because most of the victims in the confrontation between Government forces and the rebels have been from the civilian population, judging from the numbers of people killed in attacks, internally displaced persons, refugees in neighbouring countries and indirect victims of hunger, disease and exposure.

The information we have received today confirms the sad humanitarian situation that afflicts the Angolan people. The figure of 4 million internally displaced persons living in precarious situations — in camps or in poverty-stricken areas of towns and cities — is a cause for concern.

For that reason, along the same lines as Ambassador Eldon, I wish to ask if Ambassador Gambari could suggest to us ways of involving civil society. On past occasions, holding an Arria-formula meeting was mentioned, as also proposed by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

After having heard the briefing today, we are convinced that the Council must continue with formulas for the positive inclusion of the United Nations in the Angolan peace process. The Council should encourage the international community, particularly countries with a strong presence in Angola

and solid political and economic ties with that country, to contribute to the cause of peace.

Finally, we must continue to apply the sanctions against UNITA, with the certainty that the effectiveness of the sanctions regime will substantially improve the possibility of dialogue between the parties.

Mr. Granovksy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is grateful to Under-Secretary-General — Special Adviser on Africa Mr. Ibrahim Gambari for his comprehensive briefing on the outcome of his visit to Angola. The very fruitful contacts he established with the Angolan authorities and representatives of civil society in Angola will definitely help strengthen the relationship of that country with the United Nations and will expand opportunities to help the Organization make progress towards a settlement of the Angolan conflict.

The approach of the Russian Federation to the Angolan settlement was set forth in detail in the recent statement made in the Council on behalf of the troika, and it remains unchanged.

We commend the constructive steps taken by the Angolan Government to establish dialogue with all sound political forces and civil society in Angola. We believe that Mr. Savimbi, by his rejection of the possibility offered by the President of Angola to resume dialogue on ways to conclude implementation of the basic principles of the Lusaka Protocol, has demonstrated a lack of political will to halt the armed confrontation. With each passing day, the international community is seeing ever more clearly that UNITA's actions have become a campaign of terror against its own people. In this regard, we deem the assessment made at the Council's September meeting on Angola to be exceptionally important.

In the context of international efforts to resolve the situation in Angola, Russia, in its national capacity and as a member of the troika of international observers of the peace process, intends to continue to adhere firmly to the policy of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations sanctions regime against UNITA, aimed at cutting off channels of supply from outside sources to the anti-Government group. In this context, we intend to continue to support the effectively functioning sanctions monitoring mechanism that was established in conformity with Security Council resolution 1295 (2000).

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having organized this public meeting of the Council, which is devoted to the situation in Angola. The holding of this meeting attests to the consistent interest of the Council with regard to the question of Angola and its commitment to the settlement of the armed conflict in that country. The conflict, which has continued for more than a quarter of a century, has inflicted much suffering and many losses on the population of the country and has impeded the development process.

I would also like to commend Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari for the information that he has communicated to us about his visit to Angola and the talks that he had during his stay there.

Despite the gradual improvement in the political-military situation, my delegation remains concerned at the persistent confrontations in Angola, which continue to have a catastrophic effect on the economic, social and humanitarian situation. We share the concerns expressed by Ambassador Gambari regarding the dramatic deterioration of the humanitarian situation, which has led to a considerable increase in the number of internally displaced persons — some 4.1 million persons.

Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, which refuses to honour the commitments undertaken under the Lusaka Protocol and continues to defy the international community and the resolutions of the Security Council, bears full responsibility for this situation. In spite of the weakening and reduction of its military capacities, UNITA is continuing its guerrilla activities, with the civilian population as its target. This situation is a source of major concern for the Tunisian delegation. We reiterate our condemnation of such actions, which are unacceptable.

We welcome the often reaffirmed commitment of the Angolan Government to the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol with a view to a peaceful solution to the conflict. In this regard, we welcome the implementation by the Angolan authorities of a peace programme based on a range of political, social and humanitarian initiatives aimed at implementing the Lusaka Protocol successfully.

We also welcome the initiatives adopted by civil society and the churches to promote peace and national reconciliation, and we support their appeal for the

urgent establishment of a ceasefire. We are convinced that the Angolan Government has fulfilled its share of the responsibility. It is now up to UNITA to respond positively to the appeals of the Angolan Government to renounce the military option and stop holding hostage the future of the entire country. We also believe that the continuation of this conflict constitutes a threat to the security and stability of southern Africa.

We have said on many occasions, and I repeat, that there can be no military solution to this conflict. While awaiting a dialogue between the two parties, we call once again for strict and rigorous implementation of the sanctions imposed on UNITA, which, in our view and in the light of the current circumstances, are the only means of cutting off the supply routes by which UNITA obtains weapons and war materiel.

In this context, we would like to emphasize and recognize the importance of the investigation work that has been carried out by the Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA.

Mr. Jingree (Mauritius): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting in order to take stock of the outcome of the mission of Ambassador Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General. My delegation also thanks Ambassador Gambari for his very comprehensive briefing this morning.

We note from Ambassador Gambari's briefing that the Government of Angola is fully committed to achieving national reconciliation. Likewise, we welcome the willingness of civil society and the churches to participate in the peace process. Mauritius believes firmly that the Government, civil society and the churches must be encouraged in their efforts towards national reconciliation.

The conflict in Angola has been dragging on for almost a quarter of a century now. We are convinced that there is no military solution to the conflict and that the Lusaka Protocol provides the basis for its resolution. It is most unfortunate that UNITA refuses to abide by the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol. Instead, UNITA continues on the path of violence. Over recent months, several terrorist acts have been committed by UNITA. The people of Angola have suffered for too long, and they cannot stand it any longer.

The Council must, in the light of the mission of the Special Adviser, take the appropriate measures to address the situation. We note from Ambassador Gambari's briefing that there is a convergence of opinion that the United Nations should play a more proactive role. Such an opportunity must be seized to make progress in the peace process.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, my delegation is seriously concerned about the gravity of this problem, with the number of internally displaced persons having reached 4.1 million in Angola. For my delegation, it is very clear that UNITA is mainly responsible for this situation. We welcome the enormous efforts of the Government of Angola to alleviate the plight of internally displaced persons. Mauritius joins the others in the call for the international community to help improve the humanitarian situation in Angola, with special assistance to the internally displaced persons.

As mentioned by Ambassador Gambari, the technical mission of the Secretariat will be dispatched shortly to Angola to undertake discussions with the Angolan authorities on the engagement of the United Nations on a number of issues. My delegation expresses its full support for the technical mission and looks forward to a programme of action that would translate the window of opportunity into concrete measures.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): Let me join others in saying how much we welcome the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Gambari on his trip and value his conclusions and advice. I agree with many of the comments made around the table and will try not to repeat all of them.

We also find the report distressing in some respects that are rather obvious, but there is some promise in some other respects. The Lusaka Protocol obviously remains the key to a political process and the focus for all of us as we look to the future of the peace process. That undoubtedly will remain the focus and demand of the Council and of the international community. I think that the briefing today indicates that, unfortunately, UNITA still lacks the political will to begin a serious political dialogue. Therefore all of us — the Council and its individual nations — need to keep up the pressure and to continue to support an effective sanctions regime.

Until political will comes into play, I think that we should focus on the steps that the United Nations can take to improve the lives of the Angolan people

and to assist the Government of Angola to improve the quality of its governance and to foster political trust. I think that we all agree on the clear need to continue to insist with both sides that a military solution is unacceptable and, more importantly, unachievable.

We are glad to see that progress is developing in the relationship between the United Nations and the Angola Government, and we would like to encourage the Under-Secretary-General to follow up in three areas where the Government of Angola has indicated that United Nations assistance would be valuable: the Peace and Reconciliation Fund, election assistance, and the development of pilot transition projects for demobilizing soldiers.

We welcome the intention of the United Nations to begin work early next year on the most promising area of assistance: the design of transition projects. In this regard, a United States-funded transition project for demobilized UNITA troops and their families in Huambo province may serve as a useful model.

Over the longer term, we think that it would be helpful for the Under-Secretary-General to use his influence to encourage forward movement on confidence-building steps in the humanitarian assistance sector. This would help the people of Angola as well as begin to build political trust. It might, for instance, be useful to focus on a proposal for ceasefire vaccination days. Under this idea, UNITA and the Government would agree to ceasefires in specific areas of the country, during which time children could receive vaccinations, especially for polio, which afflicts too many Angolan children.

The Under-Secretary-General's visit to Luanda underscored that the United Nations stands ready to step in should there be a prospect for serious political dialogue on the basis of the Lusaka Protocol. We hope very much that that could happen. All of us can and should contribute to promoting national reconciliation and assist the peace process when the time is right and the opportunity exists. My Government stands ready to do all it can to facilitate a political end to the conflict in Angola.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as representative of Mali.

First, I should like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, for his very useful update on the situation in Angola.

Secondly, I should like to make a few brief comments, on the understanding that my delegation shares most of the views expressed this morning.

My first comment would be to recall that the Angolan conflict has lasted for 26 years — more than a quarter century. Despite the persistence of the conflict, caused by UNITA, my delegation still pins great hopes on the prospects for peace in Angola. We welcome the commitment by all parties to the Lusaka Protocol, which remains the only viable basis for a political settlement that would make possible the return of peace to Angola.

We urge UNITA without delay to start discussions with the Angolan Government to implement the relevant provisions of that Protocol and those of the various Security Council resolutions and declarations on the subject. We welcome the positive gestures on the part of the Angolan Government and encourage it to continue, in consultation with all components of Angolan society — in particular civil society, religious denominations and the United Nations — to promote the peace process in Angola.

My second comment relates to the sanctions imposed against UNITA. We believe that these sanctions are appropriate, because they make a positive contribution to reducing UNITA's military capacity. That is why it is important that this question continue to be accorded priority in the Council.

Thirdly, I believe that the Security Council should continue to devote particular attention to the humanitarian situation in Angola. We fully associate ourselves with the appeal made to all parties to facilitate the unimpeded delivery of aid to people in conflict areas. We have taken note of the information just provided by Ambassador Gambari on this question.

Fourthly, we associate ourselves also with the appeal to the international community to support efforts aimed at the economic recovery and the democratization of Angolan society. Furthermore, greater involvement on the part of the United Nations is necessary in the process of weapons collection and the reintegration of former combatants, since a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is be essential to any peace process.

Fifthly and lastly, Mali will continue to follow very closely the situation in Angola, even after it leaves the Council, out of solidarity with the fraternal people of Angola, whose suffering should be eased, and also to allow my friend and compatriot, Maitre Alioune Blondin Beye, who was the architect of the Lusaka Protocol, to rest in peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Ibrahim Gambari to respond to the comments made and the questions asked.

Mr. Gambari: I want to begin by thanking all of the members of the Council for the kind words addressed to me for the work that I carry out on behalf of the Secretary-General in trying to move towards a political settlement of the conflict in Angola.

A number of issues have been raised, and I will summarize them in three categories: first, the humanitarian situation; secondly, the political situation, and in particular the peace process; and thirdly, the role of civil society.

With respect to the humanitarian situation, I should like to confirm that the figure provided me in Angola on the number of internally displaced persons is indeed 4.1 million.

I should like also to associate myself with the assessment that, although in some areas the situation is bad and getting worse, the efforts of the Government of Angola really constitute good and positive news in terms of the acceptance by the Government of Angola that it has the primary responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance to its own people, the internally displaced persons.

As I also mentioned, every effort is being made — and in this respect I was put in touch with personnel in the Office of the President — to ensure the improvement of the physical infrastructure to promote the delivery of humanitarian assistance: roads and bridges, and the important airport in Kuito, which is being repaired. I believe that we need to continue to encourage the Government to do more to take advantage of the window of opportunity in the areas where humanitarian assistance can be delivered safely, in cooperation with the United Nations, the international aid agencies, the international non-governmental organizations and all of the stakeholders.

As to whether the Security Council would want a specific briefing on the humanitarian situation, as has been done in the past, that, of course, is for the members of the Council to decide. I agree with those who have observed that the crux of this matter is really the peace process and the way forward, because if the peace process accelerates, the issue of humanitarian assistance will also be positively affected.

I would like to respond to some of the questions asked. On the issue of next steps for getting dialogue off the ground and the new role for the United Nations, I believe that the Government of Angola is very clear that what the United Nations needs to do is to assume the role of mediator, without ruling out a complementary or supplementary role for civil society, with other Governments as facilitators. We have pretty much been given the go-ahead to explore how we can get such a dialogue going, and in the next few days or weeks we will be thinking, within the Secretariat, about the necessary steps. Once we get clearance from the Secretary-General, we will proceed accordingly.

On the question as to whether the advice to move the peace process off the streets and into serious contacts and negotiations enjoys the general consensus of those to whom we talked, I would say that the answer is "Yes". The challenge is how to establish credible contacts between the Government and UNITA and to make such contacts regular and, we hope, productive.

With regard to the role of the churches and civil society in such a dialogue, again I would like to underscore the need to keep each role separate. Their role is supposed to be that of facilitator, rather than of mediator.

The issue was also raised about creative ideas for the way forward. In this regard, I would like to say that what the Secretary-General has directed me to do is, among other things, to build upon the support of those who would like to be allies of the Secretary-General in trying to examine the prospects of these windows of opportunity — in other words, those who are willing to stake political capital on encouraging both sides to move in the direction of talks, even if, initially, they will be talks about talks.

In this regard, I would also like to mention to members of the Council that the Government of Angola has sent a formal invitation for the Secretary-General to visit Angola in the near future.

The Secretary-General was awaiting the outcome of my visit and, of course, he will have to look at his own calendar. But clearly — and I mentioned this to my interlocutors in Luanda — a possible visit by the Secretary-General will be conditional upon progress on all fronts. These would include the peace process and, perhaps, some of those areas in which the technical team from the United Nations is having fruitful discussions with the Government of Angola — elections, the fund for peace and the pilot programme for demobilized soldiers. I think these are opportunities that we need to explore further.

A question was asked about the factors that have created new windows of opportunity. I would suggest that such factors include the two-pronged United Nations strategy of improving relations with the Government of Angola and imposing sanctions against UNITA. Neither of these strategies was supposed to be an end in itself but, rather, a means to nudge the Government of Angola and, more particularly, Savimbi's UNITA, towards a political settlement of this conflict. I believe that the two-pronged strategy appears to be bearing fruit.

I would also consider that the military weakness of UNITA provides a window of opportunity. In any talks with Savimbi's UNITA, the Government of Angola would not be talking from a position of weakness but, in fact, from a position of strength. I believe it is also fair to say that the military pressure against UNITA has clearly increased considerably.

I would also like to mention the important role of civil society; I will come back to this issue later. Members of civil society are continuing to put pressure on both sides to try to end the war and agree to a ceasefire, because the people of Angola have simply suffered too much and for too long as a result of this conflict. I would also like to refer to the role of the neighbouring countries. Their support has been critical, and their clear position on the need to maintain sanctions has also been helpful. I would also add that I believe that the strong support by the Council for a political settlement each time it has spoken or made a pronouncement has also been a contributing factor.

As to the question of Savimbi's seriousness about dialogue and ceasefire, I guess my response would be that we will have to find out. And the best way to find out is to actually try to make some contacts and clarify situations.

How will the current sanctions be affected if the opportunity for dialogue bears fruit? I think we need to draw attention to the various elements of United Nations sanctions. The first is the political element — the travel ban on some members of UNITA. Secondly, there is the dimension of closing down their offices in some key capitals. And thirdly, there is the military dimension of the sanctions. I believe that a time may come when the political aspect might have to be reconsidered, perhaps, regarding the suspension of the travel ban on some UNITA officials. I would not say that that time has come yet, but the issue might have to be considered at an appropriate time by the Council — those officials who need to travel for the sake of peace — though this will have to be clearly identified and specified.

Finally, with regard to the role of civil society, as I mentioned earlier, I believe that the Government has no objection to the role of churches — I use the plural — and all other members of civil society as facilitators.

As for the Arria-formula meeting with the Security Council, that is, of course, in the hands of Council members. But I would suggest that we proceed on that issue with great caution, because we must be careful not to damage the relationship which has been carefully built up between the United Nations and the Government of Angola.

Furthermore, I would suggest that we have not yet exhausted the United Nations capacity to continue to encourage the work of civil society in the peace process — through, for example, the policy statements emanating from the Secretary-General and the Security Council. The United Nations Development Programme could also provide support for serious national non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the area of peace and the promotion of capacity-building and human rights, and even in humanitarian assistance.

Finally, there is the possibility of a meeting with the Secretary-General. That has been requested by leaders of the churches — again, not one church — and civil society. I think that we should try to exhaust those avenues for encouraging civil society at this point.

I want to take this opportunity to wish all members of the Council a very happy holiday season.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Gambari for the additional information he has provided and for his wishes.

There are no more speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Tribute to the memory of Léopold Sédar Senghor, the first President of Senegal

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to express profound grief and sorrow at the death of Léopold Sédar Senghor, the first President of the Republic of Senegal. President Senghor dedicated his entire life to his country, to Africa and to the cause of world peace. His loss will be greatly felt by us all.

On behalf of the Security Council, I should like to convey to the President of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, to the bereaved family and to the people of Senegal the Council's profound condolences.

I now invite the members of the Council to rise and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Léopold Sédar Senghor.

The members of the Council observed a minute of silence.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4445

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4445th meeting

Friday, 21 December 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ouane	(Mali)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Tunisia	Mr. Mejdoub
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Wrap-up discussion of the work of the Security Council for the current month.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-71097 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Wrap-up discussion of the work of the Security Council for the current month

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

The monthly wrap-up meeting is an opportunity for members of the Council to take stock at the end of the month, to review what they have done and, possibly, to mention the results the Council has been able to achieve. By establishing these monthly reviews, the Council has given itself a tool that enables it to continuously rationalize and improve the way it carries out the tasks assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations. It should make full use of the that tool's potential.

I now invite members to proceed to an interactive and constructive exchange of views.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): This is just a procedural suggestion that I hope our colleagues will agree with. I thought that, as a gesture of courtesy, we might allow the departing members of the Council to speak first, in alphabetical order. If the President agrees with my suggestion, after we have heard the departing members — with the possible exception of the President, who may want to speak last — then the rest of us can raise our hands to speak.

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that that proposal is acceptable to the Council?

It is so decided.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Pardon me, because I have been taken a bit by surprise. Nonetheless, we are prepared to make our statement. But before we make any substantive remarks, let me just say that we believe that Mali deserves praise for its stewardship of the Council this month. You and your team, Mr. President, have worked hard and ably against many odds. You have done your friends, like us, proud.

Because, as Ambassador Mahbubani has said, we are a departing member, I hope the Council will bear with us if our comments go beyond the experience of the past month to the experience of the two preceding years.

In less than 10 days' time, we will make a transition from a seat in the Council to the non-members' gallery. We will be doing so after a two-year experience of excitement, intensity and reward. The excitement was induced by the heat of crisis, often; the intensity by the depth of our involvement in them; and the reward by the lessons learned.

We came in with expectations. Bangladesh, as a vibrant, pluralist polity with 130 million people, was viewed around the world as one of the largest democracies in the world. A developing country, it was seen as one undergoing a tremendous societal transformation, what with the successful partnership between civil society and the Government in the crucial area of poverty alleviation. A society that extols moderation, it became known for its positive and constructive role in the international arena, emerging today as the largest contributor of peacekeeping personnel. As a land of rich intellectual traditions, it was seen as a spawning ground of ideas such as microcredit and non-formal education, which helped achieve such goals as the empowerment of women.

All that rendered us, in many ways, a role model for others of comparable circumstances. Even within the parameters of the Council's mandate, we wanted to share our experience with those who could profit from it and to propagate our belief that peace is critical to development, that restraint is the better part of valour, that violence only breeds violence and that to hope is better than to despair. These are not grandiose messages, but simple ones. We saw ourselves not as the original propounders, but simply as believers and torch-bearers.

During the two years there were moments of frustration. We made speeches knowing that sweet words do not butter parsnips. We voted knowing it would have little impact on the world beyond. We joined others to send out strong signals knowing none would heed them. Sometimes the sound and fury of informal consultations produced little result, and we were exposed to the criticism implied in the saying, "If you're not going to lay an egg, don't make noises like a chicken".

But then there were also periods of exaltation. The system we work for received the Nobel Peace Prize. Our dedication was reflected in the long hours of

work. Our committees produced commendable reports that advanced our aims in many parts of the world.

The Security Council is primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, but that is not its exclusive responsibility. It needs to develop a more sustained relationship with the broader membership, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the intelligentsia. Efforts have been made in the past two years in that regard, and we will need to do more.

Within the Council there is certainly scope for greater exchange of information and analysis between the two categories of membership. Some of the elected members do not have resident missions in and around many of the conflict areas. Apart from the Secretariat, they need to depend on indirect sources, including the media. The permanent members can also fill this need. Such efforts will contribute to greater understanding and cohesion within the Council. This is essential for enhancing its effectiveness. The deliberations in the informal consultations are not adequate for this purpose. The informals are virtually formal.

A fuller and more substantive exchange of information and analysis between the Council and the Secretariat is both essential and appropriate. The Council can think of further ways and means. The working luncheon with the Secretary-General has emerged as a most useful tool for an exchange of views with him. Such brainstorming is beginning to produce some concrete ideas.

There is need, and scope, for further strengthening the Council's relations with the troop-contributing countries. We are pleased that this issue has now been brought to the fore. Resolution 1353 (2001) recognizes the need for effective partnerships with the troop-contributing countries. Its provisions need to be implemented. The more we foster this partnership the better are the chances of success for peacekeeping operations.

Bangladesh sought to contribute to the improvement of the Council's working methods, practices and documentation. We shall refrain from recounting those contributions. I shall mention just one case of unfinished business. The Group of Friends, an extremely useful institution, has become increasingly controversial. My delegation seeks a more transparent relationship between such groups and the Council. Even if such groups are informal, their members often play a key role in this capacity, and, therefore, it would be helpful to make their composition public. The Council should have a more institutionalized exchange with them.

A gap still persists between the Council's stated intentions and accomplishments. For instance, rapid deployment remains largely at a conceptual level. The Council has an interest in making it a reality. Its realization would lend greater credence to it. The capacity of the United Nations to react quickly and put in place peacekeeping operations remains constrained. This is deserving of our attention.

We have seen how failed States can cause global turmoil. The Council could perhaps identify States in regression, categorize them and develop a methodology of early warning. Monitoring regional muscle-flexing could help promote calm. We all remember the famous dictum of Thucydides: "War became inevitable when Athens grew powerful and its perception caused unease in Sparta".

We would do well to encourage the propagation of certain values for which the United Nations system is a repository. Among them is the role of women in peace and security, which is also related to their empowerment. We believe that gender mainstreaming with regard to critical global issues has a moderating and stabilizing effect. In this connection, we recall the presidential press statement of 8 March 2000, in which Bangladesh took the initiative. Also, we would urge the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2001) and the Council's constant focus on this issue. Bangladesh attaches great importance to greater involvement of women's groups across the broad spectrum of peacekeeping and peace-building.

Bangladesh had the privilege of taking the lead on resolution 1366 (2001), on the prevention of armed conflict. We built on the Jamaican initiative and drew inspiration from the Slovene presidency. Follow-up and continuity are critical to bridging the past with the present and moving forward.

The work on prevention of conflicts will be one of our legacies. We leave the burden of unfinished business with those who remain and with those who will succeed us, whom we wish the very best. As for me, personally, I shall always fondly cherish my association with all of you here, which was, sadly, all

too brief. It will most certainly continue in a different capacity and in other forums. We depart the Council firm in our faith that in its membership the world beyond sees 15 lit candles of hope. They may flicker at times, but will always burn.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the excellent way in which Mali has conducted the work of the Security Council during the month of December. You have presented us with a programme of work that took into account the various interests of the Council in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. The relevance of the issues that you submitted for discussion in the Council should be highlighted, especially since my delegation was able, as a result, to affirm once again the necessity for the Council to give as much attention as possible to situations of tension and conflict in their regional and subregional contexts and to ensure greater interaction between the Council and the subregional actors in the search for solutions to the problems that arise.

The interdependence of the situations in the West African region and the role played by the Economic Community of West African States, particularly by President Alpha Oumar Konaré, properly illustrates the way the Council should continue to act in order to ensure that it heeds the views of the subregional mechanisms in the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

This wrap-up meeting also gives my delegation the opportunity to share some preliminary impressions following our term in the Council. It is not a question of taking stock or of producing any kind of evaluation of the work of the Council during the two past years. We wish simply to say that it has been enriching to see how the delegations of all the members of the Council have worked together since January 2000.

It is heartening to note that the conflicts in Africa have been addressed by the Council and that a sustained and sincere effort has tirelessly been made by all the members to alleviate as much as possible the political, economic and social ills of the continent. It is nevertheless important that the Council's commitment to Africa be more prominent and sustained. It would perhaps be appropriate for the Council to embark from time to time on an evaluation of its own action with respect to African conflicts that persist or that are becoming increasingly complicated, such as those in the Great Lakes region, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and of course Somalia, in order to face up to the real problems and explore new avenues that might be more effective for the resolution of these conflicts.

If the Council is sometimes prompt and effective in its management of certain conflicts or tensions, this is, unfortunately, not the case for numerous other situations whose urgency requires special attention and a firm and resolute commitment from all States members of the Council. My delegation's conviction that the concept of international peace and security is indivisible and should be applicable to all crisis situations, without distinction or proportioning, leaves no doubt as to the mandatory obligation for the Council to treat fairly and with the same promptness everything that is likely to threaten peace and security in the world and breach international law, the foundations of international law and the principles and objectives of the Charter.

I would like to dwell for a moment on the situation in the Middle East, and in particular the question of Palestine, to which Tunisia, both in its national capacity and as a country that represents the Arab world in the Security Council during its mandate, attaches the greatest importance. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm that my country remains firmly convinced that the Security Council has full and complete jurisdiction with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security in the region. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories fits perfectly within the framework of the Council's prerogatives, because this is a situation of occupation that is fraught with serious and systematic violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

Today, we feel duty-bound to note that the Security Council has been unable to play its due role over the past few years, particularly over the past 15 months marked by continued escalation during which the Council has been unable to act, with the exception, of course, of the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000) in October 2000. The role of the Council is neither exclusive nor contradictory to that played by other international actors, which we encourage to continue in their work. On the contrary, the Council's role is complementary. The Council, which is the ultimate guarantor of international peace and security, must become more directly and more urgently involved in the situation in the Middle East. That is a region whose special sensitivity we know well and in which the

Palestinian people and Arab public opinion, while frustrated, do not despair of one day being able to consign to the past a certain readiness to associate the United Nations with practising a policy of double standards.

We firmly believe that the Council can also define unified criteria and a harmonized policy concerning the imposition of sanctions regimes. We hope that resolution 1382 (2001) will clarify many shadow areas of resolution 1284 (1999) and will thus facilitate a breakthrough towards unblocking the situation in Iraq. That will make it possible to lift the sanctions that continue to affect the civilian population of Iraq and pave the way for the resolution of outstanding issues, including humanitarian ones.

The question of sanctions in general has been the focus of continuous interest, as well as the subject of controversy within the Council. Imposing sanctions is indeed a heavy international responsibility. That is why we have always believed it necessary to establish a transparent mechanism to monitor the calculated and collateral effects of any sanctions regime in order to ensure that this instrument is not perceived as being solely punitive in nature. We must somehow learn how to loosen sanctions in due course when a State or party targeted fulfils its obligations under the relevant Council resolutions. That was the case with Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan, and should also be the case with Iraq and Libya.

We have not yet been able to reach consensus on the document to be adopted at the end of the lengthy discussions of the Council's Working Group on sanctions. We believe nonetheless that the exercise should be pursued.

Many improvements have been made to the Security Council's working methods. This is an evolving process that should enjoy the attention not only of non-member States of the Council that wish to see the organ more responsive to their grievances, particularly in matters of transparency, interaction and openness, but also and above all of the elected and permanent States members of the Council, which are best able to change the Council's practices from within.

I need hardly note in that context that the more all the members of the Council interact with one another, the more effective the results of the Council's work will be. To that end, transparency, which is sometimes lacking within the Council itself, must characterize relations between permanent and non-permanent members. At stake, of course, is the credibility and effectiveness of the Council. However, the reform of the Council, which was begun in 1993 but remains unfinished, is necessary and urgent. Within this organ and outside it, we must relaunch the thinking process and there is no reason why, by 2003 — after 10 years of hard work — we cannot reach a consensus.

The system is 55 years old and has not changed since the end of the Second World War. No international system has withstood so many storms over the past 30, 20 or 10 years. We must not wait for some serious crisis to impose a transformation on us. In order to revive the spirit of Hammarskjöld and to justify the faith of Kofi Annan, we must complete the reform of the Security Council.

During their presidency of the Council, many delegations around this table have initiated thematic debates that have made it possible to exchange views on and to expand the scope of application of the concept of international peace and security. The questions of prevention, refugees, civilians, children and women in times of conflict and exit strategies have all been debated with interest. Tunisia has proposed discussion of the issue of peace-building in its political, social and economic dimensions and of the absolute need for the international community to tackle the deep-rooted causes of conflict, such as poverty. Brainstorming on these various topics should serve the Council as a reference point for its approach to the questions it considers. The fact that many States non-members of the Council take part in this in-depth reflection is an asset from which the Council should draw the full benefit.

These are some preliminary thoughts on certain aspects that we wished to highlight in the course of this wrap-up meeting. Of course, Tunisia will remain active and deeply, fervently and selflessly involved in the service of just causes.

My delegation has the pleasant duty of thanking all the members of the Security Council for their help, understanding and spirit of comradeship and collegiality throughout the past 24 months. It also hopes that it has discharged its duty of being a worthy representative of Africa and the Arab world throughout its term.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): My delegation is nearing the end of its membership of the Security

Council. In fact, these two years have been filled with hard work. There have been moments of happiness, frustration, success and failure. These two years have proven to be the most exciting and the most interesting that I could ever have imagined.

Incidentally, one of our young diplomats who came to work at the mission recently, said after several months in the Council that those months had equalled several years of diplomatic activity. I fully agree. To me, these two years in the Council have been the best part of my three-decade-long diplomatic career. I am proud of them and I am going to cherish this experience through my life.

Our life in the Council has been filled to the brim with important and fascinating events. Sometimes it was a bit too full, but I think this is probably the way the Council works.

The world in which we live gives us more and more tasks to perform. The Council needs to be ready to respond to these important developments. We should not regret the fact that the Council tries to do as much as possible and continues to be involved in conflict resolution whenever necessary or possible. Sometimes it can even achieve success, although not as often as we would like.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues whose work and experience have provided an excellent example for us to follow for the future. For my delegation, over these two years there has been a real parade of distinguished and eminent personalities whom we sincerely admire. The Council members helped my delegation to acquire valuable, indeed priceless, experience that we will use in our future work.

By the way, I want to stress that this does not mean that we will simply leave the Council. I am happy to say that we are planning to follow closely the Council's activities, just to be sure that it is doing things the right way.

At this juncture, I wish to recall that, before being elected to the Security Council and at its first open meeting on 10 January 2000, we made a pledge to make a meaningful and worthy contribution to the Council's work and to discharge this important mission in the spirit of openness and cooperation, while maintaining a wide and constructive dialogue with all United Nations Member States.

Standing at the crossroads of North and South, East and West, we wanted to bring the Ukrainian perspective into the work of the Council. I do not think that we managed to achieve everything that we wanted or planned to do, but we sincerely tried to live up to these commitments, to bring and share with you here the best that we had. Delegations like to criticize the Council for many things on many occasions. Sometimes my delegation does this. And sometimes there are good reasons for doing so. Needless to say, on the topics of reform, working methods and transparency, there is much room for improvement, even after all the achievements that have been made. Also, there are still grounds for dissatisfaction in many areas. Frankly speaking, however, having looked at the work of the Council from the inside, I am sometimes amazed that we still can find the time during such a heavy schedule to do something to improve working methods and to repair the Council's image in the eyes of the general United Nations membership.

All the little work that very often passes unnoticed by the public at large does, in fact, accomplish a lot to make this Council a body that aims at achieving results, that decides not only on behalf of but also for and in the name of the Organization's Member States. We probably have not done enough in this area, but what has been done should be acknowledged. It should be recognized that the Security Council reform we have been discussing for such a long time is actually taking place in the Council before our very eyes, through the efforts of the Council members. United Nations Member States are now better informed as to what is going on in the Council. They now have more opportunity to participate in the deliberations of the Council, and they have a greater chance to influence its decisions — although not all, of course. Just five years ago, one could only have dreamed about having the chance to get fresh information from Presidents' websites on an almost daily basis concerning the Council's deliberations in informal consultations. With every passing month, we transfer more and more briefings by the Secretariat on various subjects from the Consultation Room to this Chamber. And with the new format of the discussions with troop-contributing countries, the troop contributors have more say in future decisions directly affecting them.

I would like to note, however, that within this particular area we are just at the beginning of the road.

Much of what has been achieved has been accomplished thanks to the perseverance and innovative thinking of all Council members, specifically new members, who, like fresh blood, enter this body with new ideas, new energy and an appetite for making a mark on the Council's work. They will continue to do so — I am sure. No matter who will be elected in the future, this process of change will have to persist, because without it the Council may lose the balance it needs. The continuing shift in political power within the United Nations family towards the Security Council must be counterbalanced by increasing the body's openness, democratic character and responsiveness to the expectations of United Nations Member States.

I wish to repeat my belief that there is a growing recognition, including within the Security Council, that reforms are indeed indispensable if the Council wants to respond to the demands of the times. I think that the permanent members are feeling the heat. The very fact that they pushed for changes in the Council's work — I do not want to make specific references, but everybody knows what I am talking about — speaks for itself.

Finally, Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on the successful conclusion of your presidency. I also wish to thank you for the efficient and professional performance of your presidential duties that greatly facilitated the work of the Council in December and contributed to a constructive consideration of issues on the Council's agenda.

Under the presidency of Mali, this month has indeed become a genuine "Month of Africa". The Council has taken stock of what has been achieved and what remains to be done by taking a number of important decisions with regard to the situations in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and West Africa. We commend Mali's initiatives undertaken this month and throughout its membership in the Security Council to bring the Council closer to the African continent and to its problems so that it can adequately respond to the challenges falling within its responsibilities under the United Nations Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Ukraine for the kind words addressed to me.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): First of all, let me express my delegation's appreciation to you for the excellent manner in which you have guided our work during the month of December. Although it has been a short month, we certainly have been able to accomplish a great deal. We will remember the open debate that we had on 18 December on West Africa, which certainly brought together all the issues relating to West Africa that we have dealt with over the last two years. We also had an extremely useful open debate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo panel report, which was very useful in amplifying issues related to the illegal exploitation of natural resources, an issue which also affects other conflict situations in Africa.

Mr. President, I also really wish to thank you for agreeing to our utilizing this wrap-up session as an opportunity to provide a brief perspective on our two-year term, which began on 1 January 2000. We share with previous speakers — Bangladesh, Tunisia, Ukraine and yourself — the fact that over the last two years we have seen an extremely activist Security Council. In part, this was due to the proliferation of conflict situations around the world, but it was also fuelled by the need for the Council to address those issues which are the direct causes and consequences of conflict.

Looking back over the last two years, we have noted that in 2000 the Council adopted some 50 resolutions and 40 presidential statements in more than 160 formal meetings and 120 consultations of the whole. By the end of November 2001, the Council had adopted 48 resolutions and issued 37 presidential statements, and we had had nearly 200 formal meetings and over 170 consultations of the whole. As our colleagues on the Council note, these statistics provide a mere indication of the Council's workload, as much of the work takes place in expert groups, sanctions committees, working groups and informal meetings and behind-the-scenes consultations.

I might note that while the proliferation of formal meetings is due to the considerable increase in the Council's workload, many of our open meetings are due in large measure to the efforts by Council members, particularly the elected members, to promote openness and transparency in the Council's work.

Over the past two years, Jamaica has, with our colleagues on the Council, advocated ways to increase and improve transparency in the work. There has been a considerable degree of success in this regard. I therefore wish to repeat the challenge we posed for the wrap-up session at the end of our presidency last

month, that the Council should continue to seek ways to improve on the transparency of its work and to continue to engage non-members of the Council more closely in a meaningful way.

We wish to express appreciation for the demonstrated willingness of all members of the Council to show flexibility in the use of Arria formula and private meetings, including those with the troop-contributing countries. This has certainly added another dimension to the work of the Council.

Before the joining the Council, our delegation prepared for the task ahead, but we could not have anticipated with any degree of accuracy the complexity and intractable nature of many of the conflict situations of which the Council is seized. Neither could we have anticipated the many difficulties faced in trying to bring peace and, thereby, an end to the human suffering brought about by these conflicts. We used every opportunity to focus the Council's attention on the humanitarian suffering directly caused by many conflict situations on the civilian populations, particularly on the most vulnerable: women and children. We promoted justice for those who were deprived of their basic human rights. We emphasized conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and the reforming of the relationship between the Council and the troop-contributing countries.

The stark realities of man's inhumanity to our fellow human beings and the injustice visited upon people ravaged by war became clearer to us as we dealt with many of the issues before the Council. The added knowledge we gained by our direct involvement served to further our determination to use our short presence on the Council to seek changes in the way it dealt with many of these conflict situations. We came to the conclusion that even small countries such as Jamaica could and do play a meaningful role in the Security Council.

Many of the problems faced by the Council during the last two years existed before we joined the Council, and some have been around for as long as the history of the United Nations itself. As we leave the Council, we can reflect on the progress made on a number of these issues and urge renewed efforts to resolve those on which not much progress has been made.

In light of the limited time we have available, I wish to focus on just a few of the issues.

When Jamaica came to the Council, it was our intention to focus attention on many of the conflict situations in Africa, because it was our belief that the Council was not paying sufficient attention to Africa. We found among several of our colleagues a willingness to deal with African issues and respond in a meaningful way in trying to help to bring peace to the parts of the continent.

While there still remain many conflict situations, we have seen in the past two years an evolution of concentrated efforts. We have seen the Africans helping to resolve their own problems. We have seen increased support for regional and subregional initiatives in Africa, particularly in dealing with the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, including in Burundi, in Sierra Leone and the Mano River Union region of West Africa, and in Ethiopia and Eritrea. While much remains unresolved on these particular issues, we can leave the Council with the understanding that there is a commitment to fully supporting the peace processes in these and other areas.

To cite but a few examples, in January of last year, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was far from encouraging. While there was a ceasefire agreement in place, which called for a United Nations observer force, the conditions on the ground, including the position of the host Government, made it impossible to deploy. Today the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has fully deployed phase II of its mandate and is in the process of deploying phase III. The parties to the conflict are engaged in a dialogue aimed at achieving lasting peace.

An interim Government was installed in Burundi on 1 November, and there are almost 40,000 ex-combatants in Sierra Leone in the programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. A year ago, the whole peace process in Sierra Leone was in jeopardy of total collapse. Today, the ceasefire between Ethiopia and Eritrea is holding. One area in which we regret little progress has been made is Western Sahara. We do hope that conditions will be put in place to enable that longstanding situation to be resolved.

In Europe and Asia, we have also seen significant progress in the Balkans regions as a whole. Elections have been successfully held at the municipal level and at the provincial level in Kosovo. The United Nations

mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is on track to a successful conclusion by the end of 2002. East Timor, a nation racked by severe violence in August 1999, will gain its independence in May of next year. The conflict situations in the Middle East remain unresolved, and the Security Council has not been able to make any lasting contribution to the search for peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The unresolved issues with Iraq continue to pose a danger to the peace and security of the region and the international community.

But we also place emphasis on the thematic debates which the Council held, and we believe that it is time for us seriously to mainstream the outcomes of those thematic debates: debates on issues such as children and armed conflict, women and peace and security, the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, conflict prevention, sanctions, the humanitarian aspects of conflicts, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We now have a body of work which the Council should seek to ensure is reflected in the reports of the Secretariat and in the resolutions adopted by the Council on specific situations.

Some progress has been made, most recently in the resolutions adopted on women and peace and security and on children and armed conflict. We have begun to see some of this progress reflected in the monthly reports on various conflict situations, but a lot more needs to be done.

We also wish to emphasize the increasing role of civil society, women's groups and other organizations, which have been instrumental in peacemaking, conflict resolution and peace-building. It is important that the Council seek to establish closer contacts with such organizations and to seek to ensure that their contribution is reflected in our work.

I have just a few more comments. On Afghanistan, the United Nations is now entering a new phase. The emerging crisis has reinforced two main points. First, the international community, if united in its resolve, can rid the world of the scourge of terrorism. We also wish to underscore the instrumental and pivotal role that the United Nations must play in furthering the cause of peace and security in Afghanistan.

I wish to make a brief comment on relations with troop-contributing countries. During Jamaica's tenure on the Security Council, we have underscored the need for closer collaboration among the Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat. Throughout the period, we have engaged in intensive discussions, through the Security Council Working Group on peacekeeping operations, aimed at bringing that about. When we leave the Council we will continue to press those concerns; we believe that the reform of United Nations peacekeeping, and its success, largely hinge on those factors.

As we leave the Security Council, we remain disappointed that insufficient attention has been paid to peace-building. While we are aware that that is not entirely the domain of the Security Council, we believe that an effective mechanism must be established for cooperation among the organs of the United Nations system — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — in ensuring that an effective transfer is made from peacekeeping to peace-building.

In conclusion, I wish again, as I did at the end of November, to express our deep appreciation for the cooperation we have received from all members of the Council. Without their cooperation and collaboration, the work of the Council over the past two years would not have reached the level of effectiveness it attained during the most recent period. I also wish to say that, as an elected member, Jamaica has continued to maintain that in the Council we should seek to reflect the views of the United Nations Members that are outside the Council. Jamaica, for its part, does not have a direct interest in any of the conflict situations before the Council. We have therefore sought to take a principled and objective approach; we hope that this has met with the approbation of the other members of the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Jamaica for the kind words she addressed to me.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on the manner in which you have conducted the work of the Security Council during the month of December. I take this opportunity also to express my delegation's appreciation for the professionalism that you and your staff have displayed during our year as fellow members of the Council. Let me also say adieu to our other outgoing members — Bangladesh, Jamaica, Tunisia and Ukraine — and to

say to them, "Thank you very much; we will miss you".

We welcomed the focus on African issues in December and the open debates and briefings concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, West Africa and Angola. We were also pleased with the procedure applied on those occasions in terms of taking duly into account the views expressed by non-members before adopting important decisions. In particular, the presidential statement concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/PRST/2001/39) and the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo show that we stand to gain significantly substantive inputs by not rushing to take decisions without duly listening to the parties concerned and to the wider membership of the United Nations.

Indeed, a main purpose of open meetings is to provide for transparency and interactivity. We thus advocate an end to the days when the Council adopted decisions at open debates without setting aside time fully to consider the inputs provided at such meetings. We welcome your stewardship in that regard, Mr. President.

Finally, let me once again state the Norwegian view that brief interventions facilitate a businesslike and interactive meeting culture in the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Norway for the kind words he addressed to me and to my delegation and other outgoing members of the Council.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me thank you, Mr. President, for your determination to include this wrap-up meeting on December's programme of work, especially as this is a month in which delegations must divide their attention among so many end-of-year activities.

I have listened attentively to the very interesting statements made by my colleagues, who have given valuable summaries of their Council activities over the past two years and of their vision for the Council. I thank them for this effort in the last days of their membership of the Council; for their cooperation with all delegations, in particular the Colombian delegation; and for the friendship extended by our colleagues in all other delegations.

Colombia continues to attach great importance to meetings of this kind. We are convinced that they are extremely useful and beneficial, especially held in this public setting, because they enable Council members to consider the thrust of our deliberations in the course of the month and to discuss how to improve our working methods. Also, such meetings make it easier for non-members of the Council, in a more transparent manner, to gain greater knowledge of what the Security Council is doing. We voice that conviction because at last month's wrap-up meeting some members expressed concern about the usefulness of these meetings, especially given the very low attendance by non-members — which, I must confess, has occurred again today.

Nevertheless, we must take two things into account. The first is that it is not easy for many delegations, particularly small ones, to follow up items of maintenance of international peace and security while responding at the same time to the broader agenda, the items of the Assembly. For that reason, it is important that we ourselves think about providing these open debates with a better atmosphere and making them more attractive. Secondly, perhaps it is necessary to use documents or some type of guidelines to better direct the debates, and also to the meetings more. In my opinion, today's meeting was not publicized enough because it was rescheduled at the last minute, and perhaps that explains the smaller presence of members. Because of that, it is important that we think about our duty to interact more among ourselves — not less — and at the same time, to allow the non-members of the Council to participate interactively in this kind of meeting.

On the month's programme of work, we must highlight the skilful way that, in scarcely two weeks, we dealt with the two situations of greatest tension in the world at the moment — Afghanistan and the Middle East — and we were updated on the status of other conflicts on the Council's agenda, conflicts in Africa. As we are not going into substance at this wrap-up meeting of the items on our agenda, I want to limit myself to three comments.

First, regarding the situation in Afghanistan, my delegation believes that with the adoption of the resolution yesterday, we have found an innovative way to respond to a complex reality that combines threats to international peace and security with regional tensions and a grave humanitarian situation. The Council acted

in a timely manner and authorized the deployment of forces that were put together thanks to the decision and the generosity of a group of States.

Secondly, regarding the Middle East, it is clear that the Council missed another opportunity to influence a situation that demands urgent attention. Many citizens of the world continue to fail to understand why action by this organ is impeded at times when its presence is most needed. However, we recognize the political realities, the differences of opinions and the convictions that motivate the various members of the Council. However, I must also say that absolutely all members have always shared, and will continue to share, the desire for peace to reign in the Middle East. For this reason, it is my hope that in the new year we will find common language that will enable us to express this common view that is of the greatest interest and value and that should direct the Council's action: search for peace in the Middle East.

Thirdly, on Africa, we have completed important updating work on conflicts and have dealt with two aspects of threats to peace and security in that continent. On one hand, we examined the cross-border effects of internal conflicts, which helped us highlight the value of the regional focus taken by the Secretariat in its dealings with West Africa. On the other hand, we considered the effect of economic agendas in armed conflicts, in the context of the report we debated on the illicit use of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, Mr. President, I wish to pay a tribute to you for your proven leadership. You have conducted the deliberations during the month of December impeccably. We greatly admire the way you made room for the emerging issues and unforeseen situations so that, from one day to the next, it would be possible for the Security Council to take the required and appropriate action.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Colombia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Let me start by echoing that last remark. I think that Mali has done a terrific job this month, Mr. President, as you come to the end of your tenure. We would like to thank you for that and for your very sensitive approach to Security Council matters with a definite African viewpoint, which has been valuable to us, and the viewpoint of a smaller delegation. I think your whole delegation deserves huge praise for the work that it has done over two years to lead us on a number of issues of great importance to the Council and give us a very particular perspective.

I am delighted that we are listening to the views in detail of those non-permanent members that are leaving the Council. I think it is extraordinarily valuable to us, and I am glad that these remarks are going into the record. I will not try to cover everything that has affected the United Kingdom's experience because that would not be popular, but I do want to make a few remarks about certain aspects of our work.

The United Kingdom is extremely pleased that we do so much of our work on Africa because Africa is a continent that needs more help from the United Nations than any other and needs to benefit more from modernized, improved and developed procedures from within the United Nations, including from within the Security Council, than any other continent. The integration of our approach matters to Africa because the integration of its problems is deep and significant. We have to match the problems with the attempted solutions.

I think that over the last couple of years we have become more operational. We have become more insistent that our resolutions should be implemented. But I think we have to take account of quite a deep fact about United Nations work, including the work of the Security Council: because of the need to create consensus and because of the need to deal with ranges of problems that interact with each other, the results that we create in the Security Council or in the United Nations family as a whole are cumulative and are slow.

Sometimes, because of the modern world's tendency to focus on tomorrow's headlines — and our politicians are not exempt from that — we forget that the United Nations does its great work through accumulation of the professionalism and often the courage on the ground of a large number of people. I feel very strongly that the Nobel Peace Prize was deserved certainly by the Secretary-General, but also by that part of the United Nations system that actually risks lives, health and careers on the ground. Those are the people who deserve the Nobel Peace Prize. I am not sure that the intergovernmental system would have got there on its own. However, that means we have to be conscious of that cumulative effect and take advantage

of achieving what we can achieve, at the time, on each item that comes before us, and have a sense of the flow of events building up. That is why it is very important that we increase the transparency of our work.

But we have hit a problem here — the interplay between transparency as it happens in open meetings and our inability to have a proper interactive discussion with non-member States. Only a certain number of non-members will come to listen to us talk among ourselves. Yet, when we have open debates to which they are asked to contribute, they read statements of position. We have not solved that conundrum. It does require more work, but we are beginning to tease it out; we know what we want without being able to get there. I listened very carefully to what Ambassador Valdivieso had to say on that point, and I agree with him.

The one subject on which we have not yet begun to take the cumulative approach is clearly the Middle East peace process, and the Council suffers from that. Any other subject on which we tried to reach base with one jump would also suffer from stalemate, inoperability and unachievability.

The discussion we had with the Secretary-General the other day at lunch indicates a very interesting alternative approach to the Middle East peace process dilemma that we face: to treat it more often as an operational subject than as a subject for political statement, hearing those who should properly be heard on the question, discussing it with them and having more frequent briefings from the Secretary-General and his team. That would make a much better inroad into such a difficult subject than the occasional dramas that do not get us anywhere. Let us think about that further.

I also hope that as we discuss our own procedures, we bring the Secretariat with us. The Secretariat does the Council a tremendous service; it works miracles on procedures and interpretation. Our interpreters are our lifeline to each other. Yet, in terms of taking a procedural approach which produces the answers we want, sometimes the Secretariat is more conservative than any of us. So the Secretariat needs to come along in these discussions, as well as the 15, 30 or 90 members of the Council past and present whom we talk to, and it would be nice if, in a discussion like this, the Under-Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General could join Joseph and be with us to discuss the Secretariat's viewpoint.

I hope that we continue with our lunches with previous members of the Council. It's probably not possible to have a decent discussion with more than 30 people, so we will have a rolling membership. However, I do think that the lunches are valuable, and I am glad that people are enthusiastic about that.

I would like to make a couple of small points about recent procedures before Ambassador Mahbubani gets to the microphone. I am perfectly content with the procedures that we have for the list of speakers, because everybody seems to be happy with them, and that is more important than anything else. However, perhaps the Secretariat could do the lottery earlier — at least two working days beforehand, not the same day. A lottery is a lottery; it does not matter when you do it. Then we would know how to shape our interventions according to the placement and the order. If there is to be a lead nation, perhaps we could at least discuss the criteria for choosing that lead nation, so we do not have a new "Mahbubani round" on that particular issue.

Reform is quite important in all of this, and the United Kingdom is a strong proponent of Security Council enlargement. I do not quite accept Ambassador Kuchinsky's statement that the five permanent members are feeling the heat on this question. I think it is in the interests of the five permanent members that there should be reform — certainly reform of the nature of our work and the way we go about it. It is in our interests to have the political legitimacy of the Council extended, now that it is quite clear that we are one of the few parts of the inter-governmental system that are actually capable of taking ongoing operational decisions. Therefore, making the environment for our decision-making more effective is an extremely important part of our business. Otherwise, we are all wasting our time. So let us continue these discussions.

Thank you, Mr. President, for making this discussion possible, and thanks to those who have spoken thus far for making it so interesting. Let us continue developing so that we can meet the problems that are brought before us.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me and to my delegation.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As far as the Security Council is concerned, December is usually regarded as a relatively easy month. However,

this month we carried out a great deal of substantive work. Although we are almost 10 days away from the end of the month, we can now say with great conviction that the work of the Council this month has been full of results. In addition, your work, Mr. President, and that of the Malian delegation have been highly effective.

After the signing of the Bonn Agreement, the Council adopted, within a relatively short period of time, two resolutions on Afghanistan, which will surely have a great impact on the smooth implementation of the Bonn Agreement and the promotion of a durable solution for the Afghanistan situation.

After the new wave of turbulence in the Middle East, the Council held discussions in a timely fashion on the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Although no resolutions were adopted, the convening of the meeting itself represented the importance the Council attaches to this issue.

As other colleagues have noted, the focus of the Council's work this month is on Africa and the volatile issues there. Many of those issues have been featured on the agendas of our deliberations, particularly the issue of West Africa. I believe that such an exercise will play a positive role in promoting a comprehensive solution to the problems in Africa. In this regard, Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation of your tireless efforts and outstanding performance, as well as those of the Malian delegation.

The world is far from being peaceful, and we are still confronted with great challenges. As far as the Security Council is concerned, how to enhance its efficiency and enable it to better discharge its responsibility to maintain international peace and security are matters that warrant serious consideration on our part.

With regard to the reform of the Council's working methods and the enhancement of its efficiency, the Council has held many discussions, and many of the proposals are quite worthy of our consideration. China believes that the views of non-members of the Security Council should be solicited more frequently. We are also in favour of improving the working methods of the Council. However, the question of whether such an objective can be achieved simply by holding more public meetings deserves further consideration.

In conclusion, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine for their tireless efforts and for their contribution to the Council's work. The Chinese delegation intends to continue to work together with other Council members, including the new members, in order fully to discharge the Council's functions.

Finally, I should like to wish you, Mr. President, and all of the other members of the Council the very best for the holidays.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I will be brief, because some of what I was going to say has been said by others.

Mr. President, I want to join in complimenting you and your team on the excellent job you have done this month, and I join others in praising your service — not just this month but during your time on the Council — to the Council and to your region. We have had a lot of important issues on our agenda this month, as others have noted. However, I wanted to concentrate on this meeting, because I think it was a particularly good idea to have this meeting now, to hear from the outgoing members and to have the benefit of their views and comments as they review their time here. Indeed, they have given all of us, and placed on record, their insights into, and appreciation of, their time on the Council and their views on what we have achieved during those two years and on some of the things that we have not achieved but will continue to work on.

As always, along with all of our colleagues on the Council — new and old — we will continue to try to find better ways to do our work. I note that, while we all realize that there are many areas in which we can improve, there are also areas in which improvements have been made over the past couple of years. I think that we are making progress in the transparency and the interchange that all of us seek, but that, as Ambassador Greenstock said, has in some respects still eluded us.

But every time we address this issue, I think that we make a little bit of progress. As Ambassador Strommen noted earlier, the concept that is developing in meetings of ensuring that we hear views from others on issues under consideration — as was the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Panel meeting and

in the meeting on West Africa — does, I think, enrich and improve our understanding of the subject matter and, I hope, improve our product. I think that is a good step.

I was also struck by Ambassador Durrant's observations about coming to the Security Council and having a better insight into the difficulty of building peace, or finding peace, which is our primary and most important task, and a very difficult one indeed. I think that the admonition that we can do better in that regard also can take us into the new year.

I should like to join my Chinese colleague in wishing all of you the very best for the holidays, peace on earth and goodwill towards men and women.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Gokool (Mauritius): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, and the delegation of Mali for its successful presidency of the Security Council during the month of December. We commend you, Mr. President, for your able leadership and for the practical manner in which you have conducted the work of the Security Council during this month.

The programme of work prepared by the Mali delegation for the month of December was, if I may say so, a *programme d'actualité*. Issues such as the situation in Afghanistan, in the Middle East and in the Central African Republic, which have polarized world attention in recent weeks, have been dealt with in the most adequate manner under your presidency.

The relevance of these issues and the way they relate to the question of international peace and security resulted in intense debate in the Council. Sir, you truly deserve our appreciation for the skilful manner in which you conducted those meetings.

The public debate on the report of the Panel of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo was another highlight of the Malian presidency. The participation of several ministers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) subregion, as well as the contribution made by the non-members of the Council in the debate, demonstrated the important role that the Security Council is playing in the resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We commend you, Sir, for your initiative of convening two informal meetings and a public meeting on this issue, thus keeping the Council fully engaged with the Democratic Republic of the Congo during this month.

During your term on the Security Council, we have admired your dedication and the keen interest your delegation has shown in addressing the issue of peace and security in West Africa. There could have been no better way of concluding your term on the Council than by convening a public meeting on West Africa, as you did earlier this week. The West Africa subregion deserves the kind of attention that members of the Security Council have unanimously and unequivocally called for. It is our earnest hope that the recommendations contained in the report of the inter-agency mission to West Africa will be implemented in the not-too-distant future.

As you will be completing your term in the Security Council at the end of this month, allow me to express the appreciation of my delegation to you and to the members of your delegation for your invaluable contribution to the work of the Security Council, in particular on issues relating to Africa. As the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mali has always provided to discussions in the Council a regional perspective to African issues.

I wish to seize this opportunity to express the gratitude of my delegation to the other outgoing members — Bangladesh, Jamaica, Tunisia and Ukraine — for their outstanding contribution to the work of the Security Council and the cooperation extended to my delegation.

As we will be assuming the presidency next month, we look forward to the customary cooperation of all members in our deliberations. Our predecessors have set a high standard; we will strive to keep it so next year.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mauritius for the kind words he addressed to me and to my delegation.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I would first, as others have, like to thank you, Sir, for arranging this wrap-up debate and to thank and congratulate the Malian presidency for a month of very real clarity and focus in terms of the Council's agenda and the way in which all of the issues before us have been handled.

In terms of wrap-up debates, my delegation has always taken the view that they are a useful chance to assess broad themes in the Council's work and to look in a reflective way at our procedures and methods. They bring to mind slightly the comment by King Alfonso that, had he been present at the Creation, he would have been able to give some useful hints on how it might have been done better. I think that it is a useful spirit, even though it was meant slightly ironically at the time, in terms of how we can look at ways in which our Organization and procedures can change and evolve, as has been mentioned earlier.

There are four points that I want briefly to make. The first relates to the work programme. Ireland very much welcomed the strong focus on Africa during the past month. We had very useful discussions in the Council on Burundi, the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — including on the report of the Panel of Experts — as well as an important open debate on West Africa. These are all areas where the United Nations is actively involved in peacekeeping, peacemaking and advancing social and economic development.

In all of these areas there are varying signs of hope, as well as challenges, and the focus that we had this month allowed us to take valuable stock of the progress, and also of the huge challenges remaining, and to consider what must now be done within the United Nations, by the Council specifically, in the period ahead in advancing the progress that has been made.

The Council rightly placed Afghanistan at the forefront of its agenda again this month. We adopted two extremely important resolutions — 1383 (2001) and 1386 (2001). We endorsed the Bonn Agreement and took stock of both the situation as it exists at the moment and the support that Afghanistan and its people will need in the period ahead.

On the Middle East — a final point on our agenda this month — Ireland welcomes the fact that we were able to hold a debate. We think it was useful. It was unfortunate that the Council was not able to achieve consensus at the conclusion of it. But the fact that we held the debate and had an exchange of views was is in itself valuable, and we welcome that.

As a second point, on wider themes arising from the work programme, a clear need which has been emphasized by many of the speakers so far today is how best to bring clarity and strategic thinking to our approach. We can do that, given the level of detail, issue by issue. We can also do it, as Ambassador Greenstock suggested, by regular briefings in which we pick out main themes.

On Afghanistan, for example — Ambassador Durrant mentioned this — there is now a very real need for the United Nations system generally, and for the Council in particular, to support Special Representative Brahimi in every way possible in the very difficult challenges that the United Nations will face over the coming months. This is an area where it would be very useful for the Council to regularly assess the situation on the ground and to listen to reports, in terms of the work of the International Security Assistance Force and the United Nations role in particular.

On Africa, too, there would be great value in periodically making a broad assessment of different trends that are emerging. Much of value is happening in the Bretton Woods institutions and in the approach of the European Union — with the Cotonou Agreement — and the approach of the United Nations itself to humanitarian issues, peace-building and economic and social development. The Council in its work cannot reinvent the world. But it can try to ensure that the best thinking is integrated into its own approach, including, at the normative level, the thematic issues that are agreed in other parts of the United Nations family. Although we rightly address the details of issues at times, this is an area where it would also be very useful to stand back from time to time and look at the wider picture.

As a third point, in terms of the role of the Council with regard to the rest of the United Nations family and the international community, again, Ireland has always taken the view that it is important for the Council to show the greatest possible level of openness to and engagement with other United Nations bodies. This can be done by holding more open debates, by dialogue and by engagement, including through Arria-formula meetings. There has been a lot of progress in this area, which we welcome. As has been mentioned in other wrap-up discussions, there is also a need for greater dialogue, for example with the Economic and Social Council. We would welcome that, because there is a need for an interlocutor on economic and social issues with the Council, including at the operational level. If there is a lacuna in some areas of United Nations work, this absence of dialogue may be it.

On methods, Ireland shares the view of others that it is important that we regularly look at our own procedure. Perhaps we should make shorter statements; perhaps there should be more clustering of agenda items. There are various ways of approaching this issue, but there can be no doubt that the Council agenda can at times can be excessive in terms of the number of subjects that come up each month.

Finally, on behalf of Ireland, I would also like very warmly to thank Bangladesh, Tunisia, Ukraine, Jamaica and Mali for their work in the Council over the past two years. We have very much enjoyed working with all the delegations during the one year that Ireland has been a member of the Council. As has been said by other speakers, the contribution of elected members coming to the Council can, in ways that often may not be apparent outside the United Nations, be enormous in terms of their particular focus, their emphasis on agenda and the fresh blood and energy that they bring. So we are very grateful to them, and we will miss all of our colleagues very much. We look forward to meeting in other forums regularly.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Mali once again for a very successful presidency and to express our appreciation to the delegation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Ireland for the kind words he addressed to my delegation.

Ms. D'Achon (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like, on behalf of the French delegation, to thank you personally, Mr. President, and to congratulate you and Mali's entire team, for the exemplary manner in which you have presided over the Council this month. As other speakers have said, you have focused on African issues and, in holding a debate on West Africa, you demonstrated the Council's great interest in the continent.

This is a time for saying *au revoir* — though certainly not *adieu* — to the five non-permanent members that are leaving the Council; of course we will continue to work with them outside the Security Council. For the past two years, they have given us their particular views, assessments and expertise, from which the Council has greatly benefited. The views that they have expressed today — which you, Mr. President, enabled them to express by organizing this meeting — about their experience will be extremely useful in the future, and we have noted in particular the improvements that could be made in the working methods of the Council.

I will be very brief, as our Norwegian colleague has encouraged us to be. In trying to decide — as the Ambassador of Singapore has often encouraged us to do — whether the balance sheet for December is positive or negative, I would just like to note three points related to issues other than Africa, which I have mentioned.

On one issue — Afghanistan — the Council reaffirmed its unanimity and its ability to take speedy and effective action, adopting a second resolution on the issue. The Council lived up to its commitments in that respect, and it will no doubt continue to do so in January by adopting a third text, after the submission of Mr. Brahimi's report.

The second item on which the Council reacted to tragic events and showed that it could deal once again with a sensitive conflict — even though it was not able to reach an agreement —is the situation in the Middle East. As Ambassador Greenstock said earlier, ideas were put forward on how we might continue to make progress on that issue, one that we will certainly continue to work on in the months to come.

Finally, I would like to mention the public meeting on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which showed, once again, how useful a direct, open dialogue with the United Nations Members involved in a conflict can be in assisting the Council in its reflections and actions.

The President (*spoke in* French): I thank the representative of France for her kind words addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As it is already late, I shall not read out the three pages that experts prepared for me. What is written there is very true, but much of it has already been said today. I shall therefore confine myself to what I really want to say, that is, to extend to you and your delegation, Mr. President, our appreciation for guiding the Security Council in the month of December. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest thanks for the work you and the other delegations have done during your terms in the Security Council — Bangladesh, Jamaica, Tunisia and Ukraine.

I believe we have developed very good — I would say friendly — relations with all those delegations. All of them have certainly made a real contribution to the work of the Council. I would like to stress that each of the delegations completing its term has had its own face. One could never confuse one with another. Even if we were to read the verbatim records and did not already know who had made the statement, we could always determine who had made the statement from the statement's content. Each delegation was thus itself, and was able to act as itself. We greatly appreciate that. The experience we have gained working together here in the Council will help us to cooperate in the future with other bodies and organs of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to extend to all colleagues our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. I wish everyone the best of health and happiness.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to my delegation.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): Let me join our colleagues in offering you, Mr. President, our warmest congratulations on a successful presidency. We also want to thank you for this wonderful gift of the songs of Habib Koite, who we understand is Mali's greatest singer.

We also agree with your opening observation that these wrap-up sessions are useful for reflection. I certainly agree also with what Ambassador Valdivieso said, that we can build and develop on them. And I agree with him that we can do more advertising, but ultimately there is a market test. If we are sufficiently reflective and thoughtful, I think the audience will appear.

As this is the last wrap-up session for the year, we thought that it might be useful to do a wrap-up for the year, and not just the month.

The Security Council has 15 members: five permanent, five departing this year and five departing next year. Using this numerical structure of 15, we would like to suggest that the Council had five successful, five unsuccessful and five moderately successful files this year. I shall first speak of the successful files.

The first successful file is terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The adoption of resolution 1373 (2001) clearly represented one of the high points of the Security Council in its entire history. With one resolution, 189 nations were obliged to comply with far-reaching anti-terrorism moves. Without the Security Council, this could not have happened. This event, more than anything else, demonstrated the usefulness and indispensability of the Security Council. If there are any doubts about that, let us imagine what the world would have done after 11 September if the Security Council did not exist. We also feel that the Counter-Terrorism Committee has done impressive work, and that Ambassador Greenstock has been deservedly and universally praised for his chairmanship.

The second successful file is East Timor. Of all the issues on the agenda of the Security Council, only one promises a full and complete recovery: East Timor. In 2001, the Council adopted an important presidential statement spelling out exactly what would be needed to preserve a success story, that is, a continuing peacekeeping mission comprising military, civilian police, and civilian components, all of which would be provided assured and assessed funding from the peacekeeping budget. If we mismanage our exit strategy from East Timor, as we did perhaps in the Central African Republic and Somalia, we will jeopardize the only real success story of the Security Council in recent times. Indeed, at his year-end press conference, when Secretary-General Kofi Annan was asked what he was optimistic about, he replied, "East Timor and Sierra Leone".

The third success story is therefore Sierra Leone and Liberia. The story here is simple. Compare Sierra Leone in the year 2000, when United Nations peacekeepers were held hostage by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), with 2001, when United Nations peacekeepers disarmed the RUF. The sanctions on Liberia obviously helped, and the billion dollars Member States have paid for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone have been well spent. But this major investment must now be protected. We must ensure successful elections next May.

The fourth successful file is Afghanistan. Afghanistan began 2001 as a forsaken country receiving single-issue focus by the Council. After 11 September, the decisive intervention of the United States-led military coalition, exercising the right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter, paved the way for a new Afghanistan to emerge. Mr. Brahimi was

the midwife at the difficult labour in Bonn. So far, the delivery has been successful. But babies require great care to avoid the usual perils of infant mortality.

Successful file number five is in the procedural area. On the procedural front, two success stories stand out. First, a level playing field was created for all 15 members on the speakers list with the decision to go for balloting or lottery. I thank Jamaica for that. We agree with Ambassador Greenstock that we can improve on it by having the lottery earlier. Secondly, Ambassador Greenstock's 15 + 15 series of lunches, which he referred to, have generated many useful ideas for improving the Council's work.

Let me turn now to the unsuccessful files. Here, again, there are four substantive and one procedural files.

The first unsuccessful file is the Middle East. This needs no elaboration. The Council could not find a role for itself whereby it could fulfil its primary responsibility to handle a serious threat to international peace and stability. But I also agree with Ambassador Greenstock in this regard, that we came up with useful ideas at the lunch with the Secretary-General on Wednesday, 19 December.

The second unsuccessful file is Western Sahara. Despite spending hundreds of millions of dollars on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, which we believe costs $50 million a year, and the enormous efforts of the Secretary-General's envoys, negotiations have stalled. A number of recent developments seriously threaten the ceasefire regime. The Council must manage this issue very carefully in accordance with the relevant resolutions.

The third unsuccessful file is Georgia. Despite the efforts of the Secretary-General's envoy and the work of the Group of Friends — and in this regard I am glad that Ambassador Chowdhury, speaking earlier, noted that the work of the Group of Friends should become more transparent and accountable — there has been no movement. Indeed there have even been adverse developments. When will the Council admit that all its efforts have failed because of the lack of unity?

The fourth unsuccessful file is Angola. Angola presents a similarly depressing story. The humanitarian and human rights situations have continued to deteriorate. UNITA remains defiant. In my notes, I was going to say there has been no good news lately from Angola, but as we all know, this morning Ambassador Gambari finally delivered some good news, which we hope will be built upon.

On the procedural front, the fifth file is the Working Group on Sanctions. The Working Group, under the chairmanship of Bangladesh, was scheduled to complete its work on 30 November 2000, 13 months ago. Bangladesh did a great job in that Working Group. But all the elected members which participated in the Working Group will be leaving the Council in 10 days' time. The institutional memory will leave with them.

Let me now turn to the moderately successful files, of which four are substantive and one is procedural. The first moderately successful file is Eritrea and Ethiopia. On balance, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) is a United Nations peacekeeping success story. The Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia deserve commendation for complying with fundamental obligations. But there remain serious problems. United Nations flights are jeopardized because they cannot fly directly. The Border Commission lacks funds — a classic case of being penny-wise and pound-foolish.

The second moderately successful file is Kosovo. The Kosovo-wide elections were a success. But they have not brought Kosovo one step closer to any final resolution. There is no exit strategy. There are not even regular reviews of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We face the danger of the "Cyprusization" of the Kosovo file.

The third moderately successful file is Iraq. Iraq is clearly the second most difficult file of the Security Council. I think we all know which is the first. Iraq has divided Council members for years. The unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 1382 (2001) on 29 November was a step in the right direction. But there is now enormous pressure on the Council to reach agreement on the Goods Review List by 30 May 2002. The Council is also committed to a comprehensive settlement of the issue, including any clarification necessary for the implementation of resolution 1284 (1999). Whether the Council can deliver on this may well be one of its biggest challenges in 2002.

The fourth moderately successful file is the Great Lakes. The picture on the Great Lakes is mixed. There was a successful Security Council mission in May, ably led by Ambassador Jean-David Levitte. President

Mandela pulled off the impossible, securing an agreement to create a new transitional government in Burundi. The difficulties remain with the implementation. The peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains fragile, as that country continues to be a subject of plunder, as documented by the Kassem report, which we heard during your presidency. Clearly, new thinking is needed in the Great Lakes region.

The fifth moderately successful file is on the procedural front. Despite an agreement in principle to reform the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, little progress has been made on the new format, primarily because the informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions rarely meets. There is one logjam, but the question is how we are to deal with the analytical portion of the report. We have thought of a simple proposal, which we will put forward at the next informal meeting.

In conclusion, we should stress that our list can in no way be definitive or authoritative. Our key purpose is to generate a thoughtful and reflective discussion, which we hope will lead to an improvement in the Council's work on these files. We have also not touched upon the hardy perennials, including Cyprus, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), Somalia, and so on and so forth. In each of them, there was a mixture of good news and bad news. But, clearly, the Council needs to do a review of long-standing files to either rejuvenate them or close them.

Finally, we would also like to join our colleagues in thanking Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine for their splendid contributions over the past year. A new spirit of camaraderie exists among the elected members, thanks to Ireland and the leadership of Ambassador Richard Ryan. We now look forward to working with Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria before we ourselves depart a year from now.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Singapore for his kind words addressed to my delegation and to Bangladesh, Jamaica, Tunisia and Ukraine.

I now wish to make a statement in my capacity as representative of Mali.

This wrap-up meeting marks a threefold occasion for Mali. It is the conclusion of the month of December 2001, in which Mali assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the second time in two years. It is the end of the year 2001, and also of the biennium 2000-2001, during which Mali has taken part in the work of the Council as a non-permanent member, alongside Bangladesh, Jamaica, Tunisia and Ukraine.

This gives me an opportunity to highlight some of the salient facts and major developments of the last two years, perhaps giving pride of place to the point of view of Africa, for which Mali has striven to be the faithful spokesperson in the Council, without, however, neglecting other continents.

From the Mali delegation's standpoint, three salient events have marked the biennium during which Mali has participated in the work of the Security Council. The first is without question the holding, on the initiative of Mali, and for the second time in the Security Council's history, a meeting at the level of the heads of State and Government, at the margins of the Millennium Summit. Under the presidency of Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, President of the Republic of Mali, that Summit, I wish to recall, sought to give the Security Council an effective role in the maintenance of peace and security, particularly in Africa.

Resolution 1318 (2001), adopted as an outcome of the Summit, enabled us to identify new approaches and guidelines for the future on the question of the maintenance of peace in all its aspects, with respect to which the Security Council has during the past decade experienced some successes and for which it has at times been criticized. Mali will give particular attention to the implementation of that resolution.

A second notable aspect of the Council's activity during the past biennium lies in the positive acknowledgement that it has settled certain conflicts and begun to liquidate some operations. In this regard, I would like to refer to the operation in East Timor.

But the biennium 2000-2001 has also witnessed — and this is the third salient point — new conflicts and the resurgence of old conflicts. This is the case with Afghanistan and the Middle East.

I would now like to focus on the main developments and changes that my delegation has noted in the course of its participation in work of the Council for the past two years. The demands for

transparency in the Council's work represented one of the objectives we shared with other delegations. In this respect, the qualitative change that has been introduced in the work of the Security Council should be highlighted. This trend is visible first and foremost in the Council's endeavours to become better acquainted with the conflicts of which it is seized.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the increasingly frequent dispatch of Council missions to conflict regions. Thus, during the period under consideration, the Council sent missions to the Great Lakes region and to Sierra Leone, in which Mali is pleased to have participated, and also to Kosovo. These missions enabled the Council to properly gauge the conflicts concerned and were thus instructive in the subsequent debates of the Council. As a result, they improved the decision-making process of this body. This development is particularly useful before the mandates of peacekeeping operations are worked out or changed. That is why, in my delegation's view, the Security Council should continue this kind of action in the future.

It is also gratifying to note the development of direct contacts with parties to conflicts and regional actors through, inter alia, the holding of so-called private meetings of the Security Council. Such meetings have allowed a frank and interactive exchange of views between the members of the Council and regional actors and organizations, which, moreover, is not always assured in the setting of a public meeting. For example, on 29 September 2000, the Malian presidency of the Council organized a fruitful exchange of views with President Nelson Mandela on the Burundi peace process and questions related to the implementation of the peace Agreement.

In the same vein, the growing cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States represents a striking and encouraging development. In this particular case, the Council has recognized the need to support, in the context of genuine partnership, the efforts of that regional organization in managing the conflicts and crises besetting the West African subregion. The presidential statement adopted at the end of the public meeting on 19 December 2001 clearly reflected that support. It would also be valuable to strengthen the dialogue between the Security Council and the Political Committee of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Remarkable progress has also been made in the area of the enhanced efficiency and improved targeting of certain sanctions regimes. In this regard, we welcome the Council's new approach of imposing limited-term and better-targeted sanctions.

Furthermore, over the past two years the Security Council has devoted considerable time and attention to problems that transcend the maintenance of peace *stricto sensu*. Thus, the Council's consideration of and thematic debates on conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building, children in armed conflict, women, HIV/AIDS and West Africa are innovations to be welcomed. This trend should be further pursued.

In conclusion, I wish on behalf of the delegation of Mali to stress the confirmed relevance of the Security Council. However, we would express the hope that current developments will continue and that the long-awaited reform of the Security Council will be accomplished in order to adapt it to the twenty-first-century demands of democratic representativeness and effectiveness.

I also wish to convey my personal gratitude and the thanks of the delegation of Mali to our colleagues in the Security Council, the Secretariat and all those who have helped our delegation throughout these past two years to justify the trust placed in it by those who elected Mali to the Council in 1999. Our task has been greatly eased by the assistance provided by the Secretariat. I wish in particular to thank Mr. Stephanides and his team for their reliability and constant availability. Lastly, I wish to thank the interpreters and translators who have worked with skill in support of the members of the Council.

As we stand on the threshold of the year 2002, I wish to offer all the members of the Council my best wishes for health, happiness and prosperity. I bid a hearty welcome to the new members to join in 2002: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. I am certain that I speak for my colleagues from Bangladesh, Jamaica, Tunisia and Ukraine in paying tribute to Ambassadors Anwarul Chowdhury, Ben Mustapha, Neewoor and Yel'chenko, who left us in mid-term and to whom we offer our best wishes.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.